Some observation by Media Alliance for Tobacco Control (MATCO)

The WHO Global Conference document on “the Montevideo Roadmap 2018-2030 on NCDs as a sustainable development priority”, is a good one and I urge all UN member countries to adopt it and help ensure that the stated goals are achieved.

Indeed as stated in the document, “Addressing the complexities of the determinants and main risk factors of NCDs, namely, tobacco use, physical inactivity, harmful use of alcohol and unhealthy diets, and developing necessary multi-sectoral responses is challenging”.

And after a careful reading of the document, I realised there were certain aspects of the document which relates to the concerns and challenges being experienced in Ghana.

An instance to be cited is in the seventh line of paragraph three which states amongst others that...

“One of the main obstacles at [the] country level is the lack of capacity in addressing the conflicting public health goals and private sector objectives and drivers in order to adequately leverage the role of the diverse range of private sector entities in combating NCDs. In addition, policies to prevent and control NCDs, such as regulatory and fiscal measures, are not effectively used and can be hampered by industry interference, including through legal disputes”.

This actually amplifies the situation in my country Ghana and this is what over the years our NGO (Vision for Alternative Development) have been fighting to rectify. Another significant contribution made is also cited in paragraph 3 and with this the document notes that...

“Reducing NCDs remain a low priority across the UN Agencies, NGOs, philanthropic foundations and academic institutions. The epidemiological transition resulting in an increasing disease burden from NCDs should be taken fully into account in international cooperation and development policies with a view to address the unmet demand for technical cooperation to strengthen national capacities”.

We indeed agree with all the submissions made in the document when it states amongst others that “we acknowledge that premature mortality from NCDs continues to constitute one of the major challenges for development in the 21st century, driven by economic, environmental and social determinants of health”.

And we hope that the stated recommendations would be accepted by all member States.