Panel 1: Scaling up action for the prevention and control of NCDs

I am speaking on behalf of FDI World Dental Federation and the International Association of Dental Research. Together, we represent millions of dentists worldwide.

The Zero Draft currently refers only to the four major NCDs and mental health. It is, however, vital for the final outcome document to acknowledge that there are a range of NCDs (including oral diseases) that are closely linked to the four most prominent NCDs with common risk factors such as tobacco, harmful use of alcohol and unhealthy diets, particularly those high in sugar, fats and sodium.

Oral conditions, such as tooth decay (dental caries), gum disease and oral cancer, are among the most common and preventable NCDs. In fact, oral diseases affect nearly 100% of the world’s population during their lifetime.

Driven by common risk factors and the same social determinants, oral diseases and other NCDs can benefit from a comprehensive and integrated response.

Sugar is also excluded from the Zero Draft in the context of fiscal measures and regulations. Surging levels of global sugar consumption represents a significant oral health and NCD challenge which countries need to scale up action on. Sugar is a common risk factor for cardiovascular diseases, cancer and diabetes, and is the leading risk factor for tooth decay.

We therefore stress the critical need for the outcome document to:

1. integrate and recognize oral health perspectives in the context of NCD prevention and control;
2. implement globally recommended fiscal policies including price and tax measures on sugar, including sugar-sweetened beverages, tobacco and alcohol as part of a comprehensive approach; and
3. promote and implement policy, legislative, and regulatory measures, including fiscal measures on sugar, tobacco and alcohol as appropriate, in order to minimize the impact of risk factors and promote healthy diets.
Panel 2: Financing for the prevention and control of NCDs

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In its current form, the Zero Draft fails to acknowledge that investment plays a crucial role in reducing the NCD burden. Without targeted investment in widespread preventative interventions the burden of oral diseases and other NCDs will continue to accelerate.

According to WHO’s recent report, Saving lives, spending less: a strategic response to NCDs, the world’s poorest countries can gain US$350 billion by 2030 by scaling up investments in preventing and treating chronic diseases while also saving more than 8 million lives by 2030.

We firmly believe that every country will yield significant economic and social benefits from investing in oral disease and NCD prevention and control.

For oral diseases, research shows that effective regional and national strategies to promote oral health and prevent oral diseases result in population-wide improvement of oral health and can contribute to preventing the leading NCDs.

Several key fiscal policies related to sugar, tobacco and alcohol have also been omitted from the Zero Draft. For example, taxation on sugar sweetened-beverages is a proven mechanism for reducing sugar consumption (especially among low-income households) and can contribute to reducing the NCD burden. The 2015 WHO Fiscal Policies for Diet and Prevention of NCDs proposes sugar taxation as one of the main fiscal policy interventions for NCD prevention.

We therefore recommend that the Zero Draft includes a commitment to implement globally recommended fiscal policies including price and tax measures on sugar, including sugar-sweetened beverages, tobacco and alcohol as part of a comprehensive approach.
Panel 4: Political leadership and accountability

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Oral diseases afflict almost 100% of the world’s population. Despite the unacceptably high disease burden, oral health is still not considered a priority issue and has remained low on the global health and development agenda.

We are disappointed to see that the Zero Draft does not feature an accountability and monitoring mechanism that includes time-bound and measurable commitments for NCDs including oral diseases. As Margaret Chan, the former WHO Director-General, has said repeatedly: “what gets measured gets done.”

We therefore suggest that the Zero Draft:

1. Commits to develop, cost and implement national multisectoral NCD plans with embedded national targets including oral health targets by 2020, taking into account national contexts and the WHO Global NCD Action Plan 2013-2020; and

2. Supports a global independent accountability mechanism for NCDs including oral diseases, involving multilateral agencies, governments, civil society and academia, to support the monitoring, review and analysis of progress on NCDs globally, such as the NCD Countdown.