World Obesity Federation (WOF):

Statement made by Johanna Ralston, on behalf of World Obesity Federation

Thank you for this opportunity to make a brief intervention. We are supportive of OP9 in the Zero Draft Outcome Document, which focuses on obesity. Highlighting obesity in this way is important for recognising that obesity is not only a risk factor linked to nutrition, but a disease in its own right which needs urgent attention alongside the other NCDs.

We encourage Governments to enhance this paragraph with a reference to the WHO’s Ending Childhood Obesity report, the need to improve environments to reduce unhealthy diets and physical inactivity, and to reference inclusion of obesity in UHC to ensure that people living with obesity have adequate access to treatment and support services. We call on Governments to prioritise policies which address the commercial and social determinants of obesity, including fiscal interventions such as a tax on sugary drinks, for which there is a growing body of effectiveness from country’s which have taken leadership on this issue.

Statement made by Donna Ryan on behalf of World Obesity Federation

Thank you for this opportunity to make a brief intervention.

We are supportive of OP9 in the Zero Draft Outcome Document, which focuses on obesity. Highlighting obesity in this way is important for recognising that obesity is not only a risk factor linked to nutrition, but a disease in its own right which needs urgent attention alongside the other NCDs. We encourage Governments to enhance this paragraph in the outcome document with a reference to the WHO’s Ending Childhood Obesity report, the need to improve environments to reduce unhealthy diets and physical inactivity, and to reference inclusion of obesity in UHC.

The Outcome Document for the High-level Meeting is an important opportunity to make a strong case for investment in NCDs and obesity by Heads of State to ensure that there is sufficient political will to take the commitments forward. The Outcome document could be improved by making this case, and to highlight the importance of financing structures which support prevention, management and treatment of NCDs, including obesity.

We appreciate the challenges that governments face for financing NCDs. We believe that implementing globally recommended fiscal policies, including a tax of sugar-sweetened beverages, are win-win interventions that promote health as well as support the financing of further NCD activities. We therefore strongly encourage the inclusion of comprehensive fiscal policies in the Outcome Document.

Statement made by Terry Huang, representing The Obesity Society and the World Obesity Federation.

I’d like to bridge the two afternoon sessions in my comments. First, I echo what many of the speakers have argued for today, and that is, in a truly multi-sectoral approach, both the public and private sectors
have an important role to play in the global effort to reduce NCDs, such as obesity, and governments should commit to ensuring constructive engagement to protect citizens’ health. I take heart that there seems to be a fair bit of agreement that we need to do a better job working together. But we should also acknowledge that trust-building takes time and resources. Let’s invest in that.

Second, as Dr. Nishtar and others have noted, there are new opportunities for more purposeful and more meaningful collaboration across sectors to explore how innovations and entrepreneurship — for example, in the areas of product design, supply chain, technology and other domains — can be better leveraged — to not only finance — but generate novel approaches to solving the challenges of NCD prevention, management and control. Some of these target areas might not originate in the health field but have downstream impact on NCDs. Indeed, we need to go beyond tabulating the problems and shift to a solution-oriented paradigm. We believe that all of this can and must be done with rigorous protocols to manage conflicts of interest, ensure transparency and accountability for all those involved in both public and private sectors, and ensure that the public sector has the final say in public health policymaking. We urge that such a commitment be included in the Political Declaration.

Last but not least, the commitment from civil society in this room and beyond is truly outstanding and very encouraging. Let’s make sure that the Political Declaration commits to involving civil society, including people living with and affected by NCDs, in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies and initiatives on NCDs.