



**Sixteenth Meeting of the United Nations Inter-Agency  
Task Force on the Prevention and Control of  
Non-communicable Diseases**

16-18 March 2021

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This publication contains the collective views of the Sixteenth meeting of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases and does not necessarily represent the decisions or policies of WHO.

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## INFORMAL SUMMARY OF THE SIXTEENTH MEETING

### A. OBJECTIVES AND PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

1. The Sixteenth Meeting of the United Nations Interagency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases was held by videoconference on 16-18 March 2021. Twenty-nine Task Force members participated as well as the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office.<sup>1</sup> The World Health Organization and the International Atomic Energy Agency co-chaired the meeting. The agenda is Annex 1 (which includes links to the background papers<sup>2</sup>), and the list of participants is Annex 2.

2. The main objectives of the meeting were (i) to review progress since the Fifteenth Task Force Meeting (3-5 November 2020); (ii) to update on a range of joint programmes and other workstreams, including tobacco control to identify opportunities for further interagency collaboration; (iii) to discuss opportunities to scale up multisectoral support to countries in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, including mobilizing resources for the NCD and Mental Health Multi-Partner Trust Fund; and (iv) to review the recent evaluation of the work of the Task Force.

### B. REVIEW OF THE SUMMARY OF THE FIFTEENTH MEETING AND UPDATE ON GLOBAL EVENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

3. Members reviewed the summary of the Fifteenth Task Force Meeting and noted that progress has been made across the majority of agreed actions. Participants noted the opportunity to provide feedback with regard to the WHO options paper on the WHO Global Coordination Mechanism on NCDs.

4. The Task Force received an update from WHO on global events and assignments since the Fifteenth Meeting.

#### Actions

##### B1. Complete outstanding actions from 15<sup>th</sup> Task Force Meeting:

- Continue with United Nations country team interviews on integrating NCDs and mental health in UN planning frameworks with an analysis of results.
- Continue to work with the UN Development Coordination Office on opportunities to include NCDs and mental health into country level UN planning guidance.

B2. Agencies to continue to share technical tools and publications for inclusion on the Task Force webpages.

<sup>1</sup> African Development Bank (AfDB), European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), International Development Law Organization (IDLO), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM), Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-HABITAT), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Nutrition (UN Nutrition), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control Secretariat (WHO FCTC), World Bank, World Trade Organization (WTO), World Health Organization (WHO).

<sup>2</sup> Available only to Task Force members.

### C. NCDs AND COVID-19

5. UN COVID-19 specific planning instruments such as COVID-19 socio-economic response plans (SERPs) are gradually being incorporated and aligned with broader UN planning frameworks such as the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSCFs). Ensuring NCDs are reflected in this process was recognized as critical to building back better. The focus of the SDG3+ Global Action Plan determinants of health accelerator is now around COVID-19 vaccination equity in the context of broader response and recovery.

6. Participants provided updates on their work and identified future entry points for further action. It was agreed that *'Responding to NCDs during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic: examples of actions'*, should be reviewed and updated. Participants agreed that there remains the need for better dissemination of broader issues around NCDs, COVID-19 and development frameworks as updated guidance on planning emerges from the UN Development Coordination Office.

#### Actions

C1. Task Force to work closely with the UN Development Coordination Office on the changing landscape with regards to COVID-19 planning (SERPs, humanitarian plans) and how they are being aligned with UNSCFs to identify future entry points for NCDs and actions that the Task Force can take to ensure NCD prevention and control, including the implementation of the WHO FCTC, is a key part of countries' efforts to build back better.

C2. Once guidance is received from the UN Development Coordination Office, develop and deliver a set of webinars for UN country teams and whole-of-government audiences on NCDs as part of building back better, with the initial focus on countries where the Task Force has been operational (Task Force Secretariat and interested Members).

C3. Agency actions under the Task Force COVID-19 NCD paper to be updated to include review of actions, lessons learnt, future actions for COVID-19, including implications for future pandemics.

### D. TOBACCO CONTROL

7. WHO provided an overview of the latest evidence linking tobacco use to higher susceptibility to and more severe outcomes from COVID-19 infection. Members discussed opportunities to strengthen the tobacco control response, in line with the tobacco cessation initiatives proposed within the WHO-led year-long campaign to help 100 million people quit tobacco.

8. An update on progress of tobacco-related activities was provided, including the Alternative Livelihood for Tobacco Farmers initiative, which is expected to pilot its advocacy toolkit in selected countries by the end of 2021. Members discussed opportunities to get all UN campuses smoke-free and to take greater action to stop tobacco industry interference in line with the UN Model Policy.

9. WHO and the Convention Secretariat consulted Task Force Members on the opportunity to establish and join a workstream on tobacco and child development, and a workstream on the implementation of the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade of Tobacco.

## **Actions**

### *Alternative livelihood for tobacco farmers*

D1. Draft toolkit to be shared with all agencies in the thematic group in mid-April 2021 for feedback and consolidation. Once finalized, toolkit to be piloted in a few countries. (Tobacco thematic group)

### *Model Policy and Smoke-free UN*

D2. Convention Secretariat to set up bilateral calls with all members of the task force to understand how to best move forward with implementing the [UN Model Policy](#). The Convention Secretariat will resend the survey. In the meantime, Task Force Members are reminded to respond to the survey on implementing the Model Policy.

D3. High-level interagency group to be established to encourage agencies to implement 100% [smoke-free UN campuses](#) as soon as possible, in the first instance developing a mutually agreed time bound action plan. In support of this, map where individual agencies are with regards to implementing smoke-free campuses and the political and technical support that they require for implementation. (Task Force Secretariat, WHO and Convention Secretariat)

D4. Solicit support from the UN High-Level Committee on Management for 100% [smoke free UN campuses and full observation of the UN Model Policy](#), in line with the August 2019 UN Secretary-General memo. (WHO, Convention Secretariat, Task Force Secretariat)

D5. Hold a side event on [smoke free UN campuses and the UN Model Policy](#) during the 2021 ECOSOC High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. (Convention Secretariat, Task Force Secretariat, WHO, other interested members of the Task Force)

### *Tobacco-free schools*

D6. Scale up implementation of the Tobacco-free schools guide. (Tobacco thematic group, UNICEF)

### *Tobacco and child development*

D7. Continue to promote a workstream on tobacco and child development. (Tobacco thematic group)

### *Implementation of the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products*

D8. Establish a workstream on Implementation of the Protocol and invite interested members to join the workstream. (Tobacco thematic group, UNODC)

### *Access Initiative for Quitting Tobacco (AIQT)*

D9. Task Force Members to take note of the tobacco & COVID-19 risks, and consider joining forces with WHO, PATH and the Task Force Secretariat to support and scale up the year-long campaign on tobacco cessation, including World No Tobacco Day on 31 May 2021. (All)

### *COP9 (8–13 November 2021) and MOP2 (15–17 November 2021)*

D10. Task Force Members to register for the Conference of Parties and Meeting of Parties where they are already observers. Those that are not yet observers to either or both are encouraged to apply for observer status before 15 August 2021. (All)

## E. UPDATE ON SELECTED JOINT PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES, INCLUDING REPORT BACK FROM AGENCIES WORKING ON NCDs, LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS

10. Updates were received from the following joint programmes and initiatives that Task Force members are working on: (i) NCD 2030; (ii) SAFER; (iii) the Health Environment and Climate Change Coalition (HECCC); and (iv) NCDs, law and human rights, including the WHO-IDLO Global RECAP. Progress on each of these, along with other joint programmes and initiatives has been included in this year's report to ECOSOC.

### Actions

E1. Joint programmes and initiatives to continue their activities, reaching out to other agencies as required and report back to the 17<sup>th</sup> meeting.

## F. UN NUTRITION

11. The Chair of UN Nutrition, Dr Naoko Yamamoto, described the recently established interagency coordination and collaborative mechanism for nutrition at global and country levels, which resulted from the merger of the UN Network of the Scaling Up Nutrition Movement and the UN System Standing Committee on Nutrition. FAO hosts the Secretariat for UN Nutrition, which includes staff seconded from UNICEF and WFP, and the UN-REACH team. The 2021 workplan and 5-year strategy are being finalized. Two upcoming events were described: (i) the UN Food System Summit (pre-summit Rome, 26-28 July 2021, Summit New York, September 2021); and (ii) the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit 2021 (December 2021).

12. The UN Nutrition Secretariat, on behalf of the Task Force Thematic Group Nutrition and NCDs, provided an update on progress made by the Group. Participants described opportunities for supporting countries scale up actions on Nutrition.

### Actions

F1. UN Nutrition and TWG on Nutrition and NCDs to structure its work and align its activities with the four priority activities of UN Nutrition's workplan.<sup>3</sup>

F2. As part of F1, UN Nutrition and TWG on Nutrition and NCDs to work with the investment case component of the WHO-UNDP joint programme to develop this work at country level.

F3. As part of F1, UN Nutrition and TWG on Nutrition and NCDs to identify examples of successful

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