



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

3-5 November 2020

Fifteenth meeting of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases, 3-5 November 2020

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## INFORMAL SUMMARY OF THE FIFTEENTH MEETING

### A. OBJECTIVES, PARTICIPATING AGENCIES, REVIEW OF THE SUMMARY OF THE FOURTEENTH MEETING AND UPDATE ON GLOBAL EVENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

1. The Fifteenth Meeting of the United Nations Interagency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases was held by videoconference on 3-5 November 2020. The following members participated: ADB, EBRD, FAO, Global Fund, IAEA, IDLO, ILO, IOM, ITU, IsDB, OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNECA, UNEP, UNFPA, UN Habitat, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC, UNSCN, World Bank, WHO, WHO FCTC, WIPO, WFP, WTO. WHO and the World Bank co-chaired the meeting. The agenda is Annex 1 and the list of participants is Annex 2.

2. The main objectives of the meeting were (i) to review progress since the Fourteenth Task Force Meeting (4-5 March 2020); and (ii) identify actions to scale up support to countries in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, taking into account the Task Force's 2019-2021 strategy, ongoing workstreams, the September 2020 Task Force publication on responding to NCDs during and beyond COVID-19, and other initiatives such as the SDG 3+ Global Action Plan.

3. Members reviewed the summary of the Fourteenth Task Force Meeting and noted that progress has been made across the majority of agreed actions. Members also discussed opportunities to collaborate in engaging with the civil society to foster effective action on NCDs and COVID-19.

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

#### Actions

##### A1. Ensuring NCDs are included in UN development frameworks

- Building on the analysis presented, track how UNCTs are prioritizing and resourcing action on NCDs where they have been included in their UN development frameworks. The approach needs to ensure that: (i) there is representation across the UNCTs; (ii) we can highlight examples of good practice; and (iii) this is done in a way that is not overly burdensome on UNCTs at this time. Linking activities to COVID-19 would be important to ensure relevance at the current time (Task Force Secretariat and UNDP)

##### A2. Comments from Task Force members to be received by 27 November on the following papers before being finalized by the Task Force Secretariat:

- Governments and UNCTs: working together to deliver the NCD-related SDGs.
- Using the Task Force as a platform for joint programming missions to support countries and UNCTs to strengthen their responses to NCD-related SDGs and broader public health goals.

##### A3. Agency publications for inclusion on the Task Force website

- Agencies to complete the table on publications by WHO NCD GAP objectives by providing names of relevant publications with weblinks. The table to complete is available [here](#) (All).

### B. BUILDING BACK BETTER: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE WORK FOR THE TASK FORCE, STRATEGY 2019-2021 AND ITS MEMBERS

5. The ECOSOC resolution adopted in July 2020 ‘calls upon the members of the Task Force to continue to work together to identify additional technical resources to enhance their support to Member States in line with the Task Force strategy for 2019–2021, paying particular attention to the needs of Member States during their COVID-19 response and recovery’. The WHO-UNDP led Task Force publication, *Responding to NCDs during and beyond COVID-19* was published in September 2020 and provided a common narrative on NCDs across the UN and multilateral system.<sup>1</sup> The 17 NCD/COVID-19 Task Force webinars had enabled Task Force members to share information and activities on NCDs during the pandemic. Task Force members were reminded that NCDs were included in the UN General Assembly Omnibus resolution.<sup>2</sup>

6. WHO described the results of the report, *The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on NCD resources and services: results of a rapid assessment*<sup>3</sup>, conducted by the NCDs Department, as well as the results of a WHO wide survey in August 2020<sup>4</sup> and the series of webinars (Spotlights and Hardtalks) with national NCD Directors in Member States. The WHO NCD Department review of 87 national COVID-19 plans had shown the lack of inclusion of NCDs even after maintaining essential health services and systems was added as a ninth pillar to the COVID-19 strategic preparedness and response planning guidance<sup>5</sup>. As a result, many COVID-19 response plans at the country level were failing to address NCD sufficiently. WHO also described the work of its NCD COVID-19 working group with the products developed by its 8 internal task groups<sup>6</sup> and 11 steps for Building Back Better.<sup>7</sup> The WHO/Civil Society Working Group was also described as an important mechanism for mobilizing a coordinated and effective civil society COVID-19/NCDs response.

7. UNDP highlighted the importance of sectors beyond health and the role of the UN system more broadly in contributing to Building Back Better for the NCD-related SDGs, highlighting: (i) adoption of health taxes; (ii) digitalization of provision of basic services; (iii) strengthened social protection; (iv) implementation of air pollution programmes; and (v) mobilization of additional resources in order to respond to the NCD-related SDGs as part of Member States COVID-19 response and recovery plans.

8. In the discussion, the importance of ensuring the Task Force and its members action is strongly focused on aligning work with COVID-19 was emphasized with agencies providing examples of how they are doing this. WHO provided an update on work to get NCDs to be a core part of the Global Fund and encouraged Task Force members to advocate for this as well.

## Actions

**B1. Develop a common Task Force advocacy/technical support strategy around OP9 of the UNGA Omnibus Resolution. In order to galvanize systematic integration of NCDs into the COVID-19 Socio-**

<sup>1</sup> Responding to NCDs during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic and two complementary papers: (i) state of evidence: a rapid review; and (ii) examples of actions being taken by selected members of the Task Force. Available at: [www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-Non-communicable\\_diseases-Policy\\_brief-2020.1](http://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-Non-communicable_diseases-Policy_brief-2020.1)

<sup>2</sup> OP9 calls upon Member States to further strengthen efforts to address NCD as part of universal health coverage, recognizing that people living with NCDs are at a higher risk of developing severe COVID-19 symptoms and are among the most impacted by the pandemic

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/ncds-covid-rapid-assessment>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-EHS\\_continuity-survey-2020.1](https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-EHS_continuity-survey-2020.1)

<sup>5</sup> [SPRSP with Pillar 9](https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-2019-nCoV-EHS_continuity-survey-2020.1)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/conceptual-framework-for-the-who-working-group-on-covid-19-and-ncds>

<sup>7</sup> (i) identify and implement a specific set of NCD best buys (“accelerators”) to leapfrog progress towards SDG 3.4; (ii) include essential NCD services in PHC; (iii) expand benefit packages for UHC to include NCDs; (iv) implement 3 domestic regulatory/fiscal measures (tobacco, alcohol, sugar-sweetened beverages); (v) secure seats for people living with NCDs at the decision-making tables of international financing mechanisms; (vi) harvest digital technology to scale up screening, early diagnosis, and self-care for NCDs; (vii) treat people living with NCDs during humanitarian emergencies; (viii) establish treatment targets for hypertension and diabetes (similar to 90:90:90 target for HIV); (ix) establish meaningful and effective partnerships that contribute to SDG 3.4 on NCDs; (x) strengthen data and surveillance for the prevention and control of NCDs; and (xi) strengthen WHO’s business model to underpin these efforts through leadership, global goods, and country support.

economic Response Plans (SERPs), develop a short checklist/minimum standard/advisory note for UNCTs as the SERPs are reviewed, financed, prioritized through 2021. (WHO, UNDP, Task Force Secretariat, in consultation with UNDCO).

B2. Share and align analyses of SERPs being undertaken or completed by UNDP, OHCHR and WHO. Explore collaboration with UN Development Coordination Office for the development of a short guide/checklist to help UNCTs integrate NCDs into SERPs. (Task Force Secretariat, UNDP, OHCHR and WHO and others).

B3. Ensure common messaging around NCDs and COVID-19 from Head of Agencies of Task Force Members during the COVID-19 UNGASS (3-4 December 2020) through the development of a short set of headline common messages circulated the Task Force focal points (Task Force Secretariat, WHO, UNDP).

### **C. UPDATES ON THE MULTI-PARTNER TRUST FUND (MPTF) AND JOINT PROGRAMMES**

9. The Task Force Secretariat provided a progress report on the NCD and Mental Health MPTF. The Memorandum of Understanding between the MPTF Office, WHO and UNDP was now ready for sign off and Terms of Reference, as an annex to the MoU, were being finalized. UNICEF had also expressed interest in signing this. Planned governance arrangements were described alongside plans to establish an advocacy, communications and resource mobilization group with selected Task Force members and other development partners. The NCD and Mental Health Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) was highlighted as an important instrument to support countries build back better. Advocacy material was also shared. The importance of clear communication messaging with regards NCDs and COVID-19 financing was highlighted.

10. Updates were received from the following joint programmes and initiatives that Task Force members are working on: (i) NCD 2030; (ii) Access Initiative for Quitting Tobacco (iii) Be He@thy Be Mobile; (iv) cervical cancer; and (v) SAFER. A draft framework for Member States on national multisectoral and multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms for the prevention and control of NCDs under NCD2030 was presented.

#### **Actions: Multi-Partner Trust Fund**

C1. WHO, UNDP and UNICEF to sign off the MoU as soon as possible with a view to holding an initial Steering Group meeting. Other agencies interested in signing the MoU to discuss with the Task Force Secretariat.

C2. Establish an advocacy, communication and resource mobilization group consisting of a small number of Task Force members, civil society and other relevant development partners to develop and implement an advocacy, communication and resource mobilization strategy.

#### **Actions: Joint programmes**

##### *NCD 2030*

C3. Continue supporting countries with development of NCDs and mental health investment cases and developing additional tailored tools to respond to countries' specific requests (i.e. developing health tax cases). Explore opportunities for more sophisticated methodology for clinical interventions. Explore opportunities for 1-2 other members to joint NCD2030 (UNDP, WHO).

C4. Members to review the draft framework for national multisectoral and multi-stakeholder coordination mechanisms for the prevention and control of NCDs which can be accessed [here](#) and provide comments to [cgonzalez@who.int](mailto:cgonzalez@who.int).

*Access Initiative for Quitting Tobacco*

C5. Provide marketing support to the AIQT digital health worker, Florence and Task Force members to consider joining the initiative (WHO, World Bank, UNICEF and others).

*Cervical Cancer*

C6. Task Force members to: (i) participate in the launch of the Global Strategy to accelerate the elimination of cervical cancer on 17 November 2020; and (ii) review approaches for ongoing collaborations between partners to support the implementation of the Global Elimination Strategy following its launch and the Global Health Visions evaluation of the Joint Programme (IAEA, IARC, UNAIDS, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNODC, UNWomen, WHO).

*SAFER*

C7. SAFER core team to reach out to Task Force member to: (i) join SAFER and/or advocacy/mobilize resources for SAFER; (ii) support development of policy note/guidance on the value chain of alcohol taxes, revenue generation and allocation and health impact; and (iii) better understand the impact of COVID-19 on harmful use of alcohol. Task Force members are encouraged to participate in the web-based consultation (16 November to 6 December) on the draft WHO Alcohol Action Plan (WHO and UNDP).

*All joint programmes*

C8. to provide further progress reports at the Sixteenth meeting (All).

#### **D. TOBACCO CONTROL, INCLUDING FCTC 2030 AND ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOODS FOR TOBACCO FARMERS**

11. WHO and the Secretariat of the WHO FCTC (Convention Secretariat) provided an update on the work of the Thematic Group, including the Alternative Livelihood for Tobacco Farmers project. The Convention Secretariat organized a side event at the 2020 ECOSOC High-Level Political Forum and highlighted the work on Target 3.a and the work of the UNIATF on model policy. The Convention Secretariat also provided updates on FCTC 2030,<sup>8</sup> including organizing the first ever virtual needs assessment mission to Armenia. The Convention Secretariat encouraged Members of the Task Force to apply for observer status to the Conference of the Parties to the WHO FCTC and the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products and register for COP9 (8–13 November 2021) and MCP9 (15–17 November 2021) in the Hague, both of which were postponed

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