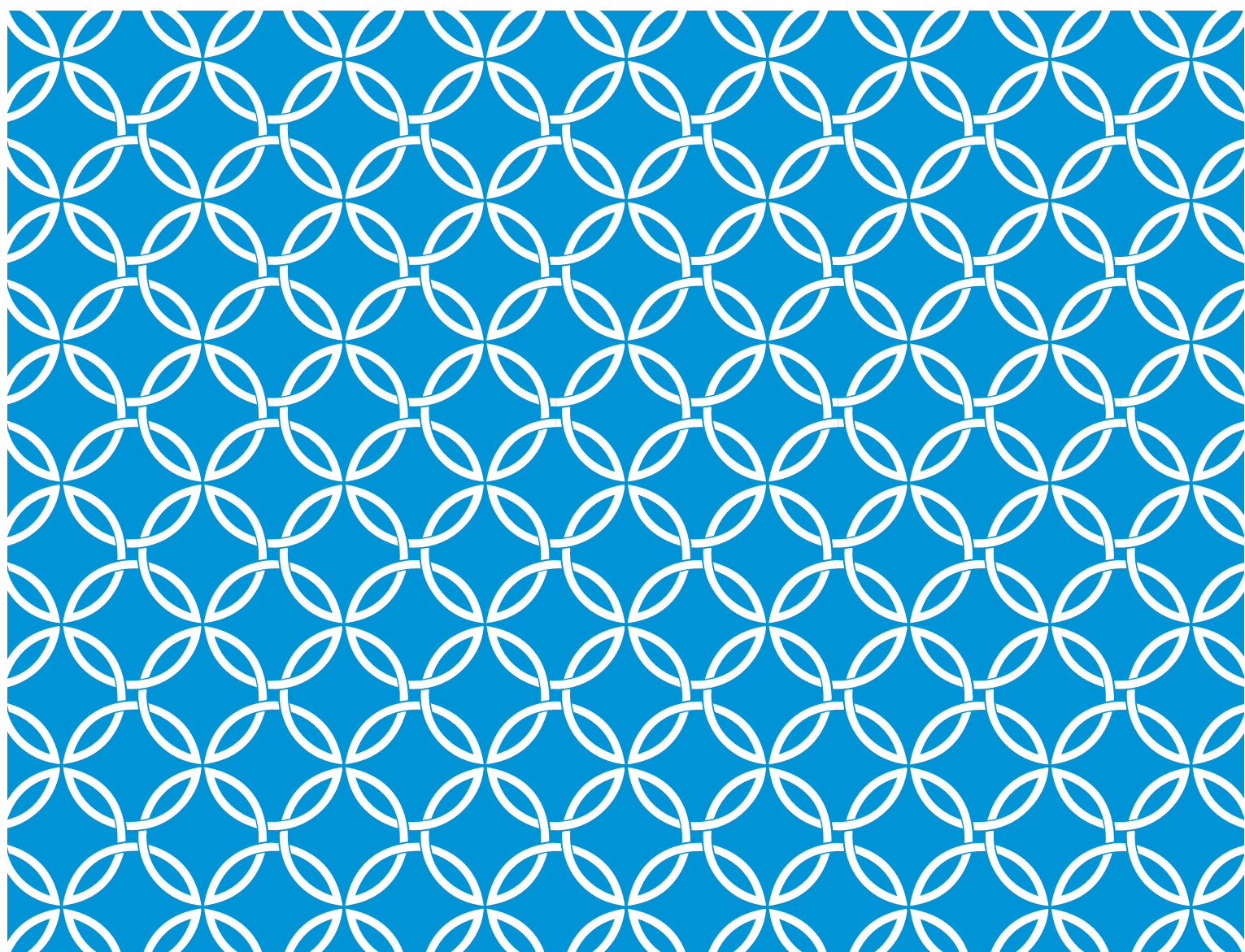# United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases

2019–2021 Strategy

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Interagency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs) brings the United Nations system together to support governments tackle NCDs and mental health conditions. It provides a platform for cooperation across the United Nations, governments and non-state actors.[1] The Task Force was established by the UN Secretary-General in 2013.

Over 40 UN agencies, including development banks and other intergovernmental organizations are members of the Task Force, and together they promote whole-of-government and whole-of-society action to respond to the NCD-related Sustainable Development Goals, including Target 3.4 (by 2030 reduce by one-third pre-mature mortality from NCDs through prevention and treatment, and promote mental health and wellbeing).[2] Through its work, it moves countries a step closer towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development[3] and the triple billion targets in WHO's 13th General Programme of Work.[4]

The impact of NCDs and mental health conditions on the social and economic development of all countries is enormous – and is growing fast. NCDs are the biggest killers in the world, accounting for more than 70% of the death toll, and the cumulative economic loss attributed to NCDs is estimated to surpass USD 7 trillion in low- and middle-income countries over the period 2011–2025, equivalent to approximately 4% of these countries' current annual output.

Countries face many challenges in responding to the rapid rise in NCDs and the need to improve mental health as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These include: (i) insufficient political action on NCDs; (ii) limited government capacity for policy development, coherence and implementation; (iii) insufficient domestic and international finance; (iv) issues around the impact of economic, market and commercial factors; and (v) weak health systems, including limited progress on achieving universal health coverage.[5]

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[1] i.e. non-government organizations, private sector entities, academia and philanthropic organizations.

[2] In line with recent ECOSOC resolutions on the Task Force, this strategy uses the term NCD-related SDG targets. The Task Force uses NCD-related SDG targets to include those for NCDs, mental health and environmental determinants of NCDs. The 2018 Task Force report to ECOSOC indicates that global joint programmes and thematic working groups led by the Task Force address 12 SDGs and 30 targets (http://undocs.org/E/2018/49).

[3] Resolution A/RES/70/1. Transforming our world: the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. In: Seventieth United Nations General Assembly, New York, 25 September 2015. New York: United Nations; 2015. Available from: http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E.

[4] The triple billion targets are: 1 billion more people with universal health coverage, 1 billion better protected from health emergencies, and 1 billion enjoying better health and well-being primarily through multisectoral policy, advocacy, and regulation.

[5] World Health Organization. Preparation for the third High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases, to be held in 2018. Report by the Director-General. 2018. A71/14. http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA71/A71_14-en.pdf.

Responding to these challenges requires action beyond the health sector and countries are looking to the United Nations system for support. Countries need to prioritize low-cost, high-impact interventions to prevent and treat NCDs and mental health conditions. These interventions require governments to work as one – and join forces with other key stakeholders across society. The Task Force provides direct technical assistance to countries and mobilizes resources for the NCD and mental health initiatives. The Task Force also encourages new partnerships to support the NCD-related SDG targets, bringing governments, the United Nations system, and non-state actors across health and non-health sectors together to respond to some of the greatest global health challenges of today. The Task Force is committed to ensuring all people can exercise their rights and have equal opportunities to live healthy lives in a world free of the avoidable burden of NCDs.

The United Nations system is at its most effective when working in partnership with the full range of development partners, including non-state actors, while ensuring that its work is protected from undue influence by any form of vested interest.[6]

This Task Force Strategy, 2019-2021 builds on the experience of the 2014–2017 work plans (Annex 1). The strategy has four priorities that are in line with the Task Force's Terms of Reference[7] and mandates provided through United Nations General Assembly Political Declarations and ECOSOC resolutions concerning the Task Force.[8]

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[6] In accordance with the overarching principles and approaches included in paragraph 18 of the WHO Global Action Plan 2013-2020. A specific example is the model policy for agencies of the United Nations system on preventing tobacco industry interference. https://www.who.int/ncds/un-task-force/events/model-policy-agencies-united-nations1.pdf?ua=1.

[7] http://www.who.int/ncds/un-task-force/ToR_UNIATF.pdf?ua=1.

[8] Available at https://www.who.int/ncds/un-task-force/en/.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. Supporting countries to deliver multisectoral action on the NCD-related SDG targets

The Task Force will respond to the increasing demand for context-specific technical assistance from countries to support national action and capacity building on the NCD-related SDG targets.

The Task Force will:

▸ Advocate at the highest level of governments for greater investment in the prevention and control of NCDs and support for mental health, including whole-of-government and whole-of-society action.

▸ Provide and facilitate technical assistance to countries, through global, regional and country joint programming, both directly and through United Nations country teams and their respective regional offices, including identifying and sharing knowledge on best practices on the prevention and control of the NCD-related SDG targets.

▸ Serve as an entry point for countries to obtain on-demand joint UN technical support.

2. Mobilizing resources

The Task Force will mobilise resources to support the development of national responses to reach the NCD-related SDG targets.

The Task Force will:

▸ Work with Member States and development partners to launch a financing mechanism(s) to enable governments to catalyse action on NCDs and mental health, including accessing technical support and policy advice from the UN system and other development partners, including non-state actors to reduce the levels of NCDs and improve mental health.

▸ Build the technical and financial resource base of UN system to support national responses, encouraging its members to increase their individual and collective human and financial resources to make a more effective contribution towards supporting countries in responding to NCDs and mental health conditions.

3. Harmonising action and forging partnerships

The Task Force will support countries by harmonising its work with other global health and development initiatives and forging multi-stakeholder partnerships and alliances at all levels to achieve public health and NCD-related SDG targets.[9]

The Task Force will:

- ▸ Identify synergies with relevant global health institutions, partnerships and initiatives and areas of cooperation and joint action within the context of the Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All, [10] including support for operationalisation primary health care approaches to the prevention and control of the NCD-related SDG targets.

- ▸ Expand and develop new partnerships with governments and non-state actors (including, community-led interventions) while ensuring that the Task Force and its members are protected from undue influence by any form of vested interest.[11] These include UN joint programmes, collaborations and thematic groups (see Annex 2).

- ▸ Advocate for and support 'making the money work' – ensuring countries' domestic resources and development assistance are optimally planned for and utilized for "best buys" and deliver maximum impact.

4. Being an exemplar for UN reform

In line with the UN Secretary-General's commitment to reposition the UN development system to deliver on the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, the Task Force will enable its members, at all levels, to work as one, in supporting governments respond to the NCD-related SDG targets.

The Task Force will:

- ▸ Support Task Force members build their own technical and advocacy capacity in accordance with their agency-specific mandates while deepening collaboration between its members at global, regional and country level.

- ▸ Promote the inclusion of NCD-related SDG targets and outcomes in United Nations sustainable development frameworks (UNSDFs), policies, strategies and plans at country level and support resource mobilization for their delivery.

- ▸ Encourage its Members' governing bodies to consider NCDs and mental health in the context of the triple billion targets and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

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[9] in line with E/RES/2018/13.

[10] Towards a Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All. Uniting to Accelerate Progress towards the Health-related SDGs. https://www.who.int/sdg/global-action-plan/Global_Action_Plan_Phase_I.pdf.

[11] Paragraph 22 of Task Force Terms of Reference https://www.who.int/ncds/un-task-force/ToR_UNIATF.pdf?ua=1.

MONITORING AND EVALUATING RESULTS AND IMPACT

Determining progress at country or global level that is directly attributable to the Task Force is not always possible. Nevertheless, the Task Force can demonstrate its ability to contribute to wider improvements on the NCD-related SDG targets.

INDICATIVE MONITORING FRAMEWORK

Indicator	What success will look like	How will we measure success
Supporting countries deliver multisectoral action		
1. Number of countries that request and receive policy guidance and technical support from the Task Force with evidence of recommendations being implemented.	30 countries request and receive support from the Task Force or two or more of its members from the global or country level.	Task Force reports that document countries' demands, responses to those demands and recommendations, and their implementation.
2. Number of UN-led global, regional and country joint programmes[12] in place, resourced and delivering at country level.	5 global joint programmes financed and operational and being financed. Increased numbers of joint UN programmes implemented at country level.	Global joint programme reports and assessments of new and existing joint programmes at country level, including UNSDF budget and plans.
Mobilising resources		
3. Multi-donor catalytic fund in place and operational.	Fund launched with countries accessing funding and benefiting from the technical assistance made available.	Reports from those governing the fund.
4. Number of countries with multilateral development bank projects that include the NCD-	An increase in countries that received development bank projects (baseline TBD).	World Bank and regional development bank reports.