

WHO intervention for the introduction of the UNIATF 2023 report

25 July 2023

Thank you

Excellencies, colleagues and friends

It is a pleasure to be here today.

Many countries remain off track to meet global commitments on non-communicable diseases.

- The global share of deaths from non-communicable diseases among all deaths increased from 61 per cent in 2000 to 74 per cent in 2019. Globally, 7 of the 10 leading causes of death in 2019 were non-communicable diseases;
- Of premature deaths (under age 70) from non-communicable diseases in 2019, 86 per cent occurred in low- and middle-income countries;
- Premature mortality and morbidity from non-communicable diseases can partly be attributed to a lack of success in addressing many risk factors (tobacco use, harmful use of alcohol, air pollution, unhealthy diets and physical inactivity) but also failures of health system capacity to meet needs for prevention and treatment;
- Nearly 1 billion people lived with a mental disorder in 2019. Depression and anxiety alone cost \$1 trillion annually;

The report that you have in front of you highlights the achievements of the Task Force over the last ten years, since its establishment in 2013, while focusing on specific actions that the Task Force has undertaken over the last year. Activities have included country missions and technical support that have focused on specific areas, for example road safety, physical activity, and NCD and mental health investment cases.

A total of 40 NCDs, mental health, road safety and physical activity investment cases have been undertaken between 2016 and 2023. Countries are implementing recommendations that come from the work. Investment cases are undoubtedly contributing to changes in policy and strengthening of governance and financing. A number of examples are described in the report.

Lessons from the work of the Task Force at the country level include:

- (i) tools to strengthen governance, financing and multisectoral action that have been developed at the global level need to be tailored to the country context. Where this is done it results in powerful outcomes;
- (ii) relatively low levels of technical and financial support will catalyse effective action. Continuity of support is critical to increase and sustain impact, at least in the near term as capacities develop;

- (iii) multisectoral engagement is required to prevent and control NCDs and improve mental health and maximize the impact on sustainable development more broadly; and
- (iv) digital health requires to be operationalized as a “best buy” for Member States to cover those in need with preventive and management services.

The NCD and mental health multi-partner trust fund has been established by WHO, UNDP and UNICEF to respond to country needs in line with these lessons. A small and lean Secretariat is now in place. Kenya, Thailand, and Uruguay have joined the UN agencies as founding strategic partners. The demand for catalytic funding from the Trust Fund has been expressed over many years by Member States – and this instrument will be pivotal in supporting them to scale up action – while putting them in the driver’s seat.

The Trust Fund, also known as Health4Life, will enable governments and their partners to address **national priorities** for:

- expanding access to treatment,
- enhancing policies, legislation and regulation,
- modernizing health systems through digital solutions.
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Health4Life aims to raise \$250 million over its first five years. The Task Force urges Council members to contribute to the Fund as it provides the best opportunity to support a One-UN response on NCDs and mental health that ensures comprehensive and collaborative country-led action.

The Task Force report describes the 2022-2025 strategy. It builds on the experience of the 2019–2021 strategy and the findings of the midpoint evaluation of the WHO Global Action Plan. It has four objectives:

- Supporting countries in accelerating multisectoral action on the non-communicable disease-related and mental health-related Sustainable Development Goal targets.
- Mobilizing resources to support the development of country-led responses.
- Harmonizing action and forge cross-sectoral partnerships.
- Being an exemplar for an ever more effective United Nations system.

The Task Force Secretariat remains ever grateful for the financial support it receives from partners, which currently include the European Union, the Gulf Health Council, the Russian Federation and Italy.

Thank you for your attention.