

Introduction of the UNIATF 2024 report

23 July 2024

Excellencies, colleagues and friends,

It is a pleasure to be here today.

WHO would like to express appreciation to ECOSOC for the consideration of this agenda item, as it is an integral discussion in the lead-up to the high-level meeting on noncommunicable diseases next year.

The report that you have in front of you highlights the work of the task force over this last year.

There has been considerable work undertaken to make the political and economic case for investing in NCDs and mental health at the country level, and Member States continue to request support for investment cases. In this year's report, we set out the conditions that we consider need to be in place to ensure investment cases are impactful.

There has also been ongoing work across the main NCD risk factors, namely, tobacco and alcohol use, physical inactivity, unhealthy diet, and air pollution, as well as activities to promote mental health and brain health.

In response to the previous calls from the Council to scale up technical support to Member States in the area of digital health, the Task Force has developed a global digital health business case including telemedicine, mobile messaging and chatbot interventions which will be launched in September. A national digital health investment case for NCDs is already being developed in a number of countries.

The Task Force continues to expand its partnerships, most recently signing an agreement with the G7 and G20 Health and Development Partnership to develop an exciting new legislators' initiative.

Partnerships are central to the Health4Life Fund, which is a multi-partner trust fund that was established by WHO, UNDP and UNICEF and spearheaded by Kenya, Thailand, and Uruguay. We were delighted that during this year's World Health Assembly, Mauritius and the Philippines have also joined as strategic partners.

Health4Life Fund launched its inaugural call for proposals in December 2023 thanks to funding from the Scottish Government. The first grant will be awarded next month. Funds permitting, a second grant cycle is expected to be announced in September.

The high-level meeting on NCDs next year will be a milestone to renew our commitment to a whole-of-government whole-of-society, and whole-of-UN action.

During the last year there have been three important meetings, the outcomes of which will contribute to preparations for next year's high-level meeting:

- The ministerial meeting on NCDs and mental health in small island developing states convened by the Government of Barbados, WHO and PAHO, with a strong outcome document – the Bridgetown Declaration, which was also endorsed in the outcome document of the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing states, the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS;
- The global high-level technical meeting on NCDs in humanitarian settings, hosted by the Government of the Kingdom of Denmark and co-organized by the WHO and UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency;

and

- The international dialogue on sustainable financing for NCDs and mental health – a collaboration between the WHO and the World Bank Group.

The Task Force Secretariat and a number of Task Force members made valuable contributions to each of these meetings. The Task Force is committed to drive forward actions to implement the Bridgetown Declaration and the recommendations from the other two meetings.

Working across sectors is critical to effective action on NCDs and mental health. Supporting this is central to the work of the Task Force.

Let me conclude by once again thanking the European Union, the Gulf Health Council, Gulf CDC, the Russian Federation and Italy for their support for the work of the Task Force.

And a special thank you to the Philippines and El Salvador for their efficient and expeditious facilitating of the resolution.

Thank you.