

WHO Civil Society Working Group on NCDs Consensus Statement
Multistakeholder Hearing for UN High Level Meeting on
Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health
2nd May 2025

The WHO Civil Society Working Group on NCDs represents over 30 organisations, collaborating to strengthen the global response to tackling all NCDs and mental health conditions, and accelerate achievement of the related global targets, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The UN Secretary-General's progress report on NCDs and Mental Health highlighted that the global response has been inadequate. Urgent action is needed.

Therefore, we call for the UN High Level Meeting's political declaration to include the following elements.

Enhancing Governance:

Ensure meaningful participation by individuals across all age groups and communities living with and affected by NCDs and mental health conditions, and health personnel in all aspects of governance, decision-making and delivery through social participation mechanisms.

Build multi-sector collaboration, and uphold the commitment made at the 2018 Third High-Level Meeting to promote policy coherence and coordination through whole-of-government and health-in-all-policies approaches, delivered through a national multisectoral coordination mechanism.

In doing so, governments must strengthen public health governance by establishing clear, enforceable safeguards to prioritise public health over commercial interests and prevent conflicts of interest and undue influence from health-harming industries.

In line with the Bridgetown Declaration, we specifically urge governments to ensure that health-promoting policies are not undermined by trade or investment agreements.

Strengthening Health Systems:

Strengthen community and primary health care that integrates NCD prevention and care and deinstitutionalises mental health services and provide access to person-centred specialised care.

Integrate NCDs and Mental Health care into universal health coverage mandatory comprehensive service packages (including prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and

palliative care) and reverse the rising trend in catastrophic out-of-pocket health expenditures.

Invest in the health workforce, to enhance holistic and quality care, prevent shortages, enhance working conditions and address the causes of “brain drain”.

Increase the availability of, and equitable access to care by strengthening and harmonising regulatory mechanisms, improving regional and local production and procurement capabilities of medicines, diagnostics and technologies, developing pricing policies, and facilitating technology transfer by addressing intellectual property and financing barriers.

Increase the sustainability of health systems, ensuring they are climate-resilient and prepared for current and future environmental health challenges.

Creating Health-Promoting Environments:

Accelerate implementation of the WHO best buys, the evidence-based effective and cost-effective measures that reduce exposure to unhealthy products like tobacco, alcohol, unhealthy foods and beverages, and commit to addressing fossil fuel-driven air pollution and increasing population levels of physical activity.

Address social, environmental, economic, and commercial determinants that are contributing to the prevalence and unequal burden of NCDs and mental health conditions.

Promote health education through information and awareness campaigns to educate the public and policymakers, fostering health literacy, and reducing the stigma of NCDs and mental health conditions.

Support capacity development of lived-experience experts and community advocates to promote ownership of healthcare interventions.

Adopt prevention strategies to address suicide, particularly among adolescents, for whom suicide is a leading cause of death, and repealing discriminatory legislation such as the criminalisation of suicidal behaviours.

Building Sustainable Financing:

Commit to a set of global financing targets for NCD and mental health investment.

Implement innovative financing strategies, including taxes on unhealthy products and other fiscal measures, that offer a triple win: reducing consumption of harmful goods, improving population and planetary health, and generating revenue that can help support achievement of universal health coverage.

Strengthening Data and Surveillance:

Strengthen health information systems for routine collection and analysis of data that support the design, implementation, and monitoring of effective, equitable and targeted interventions.

Establish robust frameworks for tracking progress, involving civil society organisations and communities in monitoring and evaluation processes to hold governments accountable.

Provide the safe, well-resourced, and politically enabled environment essential for the social participation of civil society actors in these processes, including repealing restrictive laws, ensuring access to information, and protecting those who challenge vested interests.

Aligning with [the NCD Alliance Call to Lead](#) on NCDs and the [Kigali Youth Declaration](#), we urge all governments to commit to resourcing, implementing and monitoring evidence-based actions to protect against the risk factors and address the wider determinants of health, strengthen health systems and the health workforce to ensure the best care and outcomes for the billions of people affected by NCDs and mental health conditions globally.