

NCDs in the international arena: update 8

This eighth **state-of-play update** from C3 Collaborating for Health begins with a summary of progress towards the Post-2015 Development Agenda (which will supersede the Millennium Development Goals) and its relevance for NCDs. This will set the direction for international sustainable development over the next 15 years. Also included in this report are developments of the WHO's international framework for NCDs, particularly the Global Coordination Mechanism.

1. The Post-2015 Development Agenda

'We are in a very different world to the one [in] which the Millennium Development Goals were drawn up. Much has been achieved; now, we need to build on that success. And we will need to make radical breakthroughs, too – because a business-as-usual approach will not take us anywhere near achieving the Sustainable Development Goals' – Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn, Addis Ababa, July 2015

1.1 Planning

The process of **intergovernmental negotiation** has been ongoing since January, to produce the successor to the Millennium Development Goals (which are due to end at the end of 2015). Eight meetings took place between January and July 2015 (details [here >>](#)), covering all aspects of the post-2015 framework, which includes the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets. (The SDGs have not been reopened for discussion during the course of the year – the 17 goals remain unaltered.)

On 26–7 May, informal interactive hearings with civil society (including NGOs and the private sector) were held, to bring in active participation and diverse experience in the new development agenda ([here >>](#)). A summary document will be made available prior to the UN Summit in September.

1.2 Outcome document

The outcome document is at the heart of the post-2015 development agenda. After much negotiation, as noted above, it was adopted on 2 August and is available in its final form [here >>](#). It is in five sections:

- **preamble** – setting out the '5 Ps': that it is a plan of action for **people, planet and prosperity**, strengthening **peace** and requiring **partnership** for implementation;
- **Declaration** – setting out the vision of the new Sustainable Development Goals and their targets, and stating the need for 'a revitalised Global Partnership to ensure its implementation'. It also notes that 'We are committed to the prevention and treatment of non-communicable diseases, including behavioural, developmental and neurological disorders, which constitute a major challenge for sustainable development';
- a list of the **17 SDGs and 169 targets**;
- **means of implementation and the Global Partnership** – 'bringing together Governments, civil society, the private sector, the United Nations system and other actors, and mobilizing all available resources'. This will be supported by the policies and actions outlined in the new framework for financing for development (see section 1.4 below);
- **plans for follow-up and review** – stating a commitment to follow up systematically over the 15 years of the SDGs. Review requires a set of indicators, currently being developed (see section 1.3 below), which will be complemented by national-level indicators that member states are being encouraged to

Director: Christine Hancock

CAN Mezzanine, 7–14 Great Dover Street, London SE1 4YR, United Kingdom; Tel +44 (0) 20 3096 7706
www.c3health.org; Twitter @c3health

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develop. The High Level Political Forum (HLPF), which meets annually under ECOSOC (the UN Economic and Social Council) will be the main review body, overseeing a network of processes and undertaking regular reviews, including thematic reviews of progress towards the SDGs. The HLPF will also meet at the UN General Assembly every four years – the first such meeting will be in 2019 – to provide guidance at the highest political level.

1.3 Indicators

Ensuring an **effective system of monitoring the SDGs** will be key to the success of the post-2015 development agenda. The process to develop a set of indicators to support the SDGs is being led by an interagency expert group (IAEG-SDGs), which held its first formal meeting in June. Workstreams on a) conceptual frameworks and indicator concepts and definitions and b) interlinkages across goals and targets launched in July.

The first list of indicators was published on 11 August ([here >>](#)) with consultation encouraged from civil society, academia and private sector until 7 September ([here >>](#)).

The current **indicators for the target on NCDs** are:

- probability of dying of cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, or chronic respiratory disease between ages 30 and 70; and
- current tobacco use among persons 15 years and over.

Other indicators are also of relevance, such as the proportion of population with access to affordable essential medicines on a sustainable basis.

The next meeting of the IAEG-SDGs – which will review the list of possible indicators, discuss the global indicator framework (including interlinkages across targets and critical issues including data disaggregation), and address next steps – will be held in October ([here >>](#)). The final proposal is due to be adopted by the UN Statistical Commission in March 2016, with later adoption by ECOSOC and the UN General Assembly.

Information on the indicator process is available [here >>](#).

1.4 Financing for development

The means by which the Post-2015 Development Agenda will be financed is a serious concern – we need to move from billions to trillions of dollars of development funding, with the UN Conference on Trade and Development estimating that it will cost \$175 trillion over 15 years to implement the SDGs.

Although financing is not addressed directly in the Post-2015 Agenda, it was discussed in detail for a week in July in Addis Ababa at the third **International Conference on Financing for Development** (FfD3). This was preceded by consultations, including with civil society and the private sector. The Conference was attended by thousands of people, including representatives from 174 UN member states.

An outcome document – the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) ([here >>](#)) – was agreed, which is intended to be a policy framework to mobilise countries' resources to implement the Post-2015 Development Agenda (it will be endorsed at the General Assembly in September). Importantly, the AAAA has a strong focus on health and on NCDs. It notes the burden of NCDs worldwide and the need to strengthen health systems as part of sustainable development, and calls for tobacco taxation as a revenue source.

Read more about FfD3 in a C3 news alert [here >>](#).

A well-attended side event, organised by the NCD Alliance, was held on 'Securing a healthy future: sustainable financing for NCDs in the Post-2015 Agenda' ([here >>](#)).

1.5 Looking ahead: the UN High-level Summit in September

The post-2015 framework will be formally adopted at the **High-level Summit at the UN General Assembly** in New York on 25–7 September ([here >>](#)). The final date for NGOs to apply to attend the Summit is Monday 24 August ([here >>](#)).

As the Summit, the outcome document will be adopted, and there will be six interactive dialogues on the theme of ‘Transforming the world: realizing the post-2015 development agenda’:

- ending poverty and hunger;
- tackling inequalities, empowering women and girls, and leaving no one behind (health falls under this theme);
- fostering sustainable economic growth, transformation and promoting sustainable consumption and production;
- protecting our planet and combating climate change;
- building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions to achieve sustainable development; and
- delivering on a revitalised ‘Global Partnership’.

On 1 January 2016 the new development agenda – including the SDGs – will formally replace the Millennium Development Goals.

2. Progress on the Global NCD Framework

2.1 Follow-up to the 2014 UN Review of NCDs

November’s follow-up report to the United Nations’ 2014 Review of NCDs was noted both by the Executive Board of the WHO in January and by the WHA in May ([here >>](#)), with member states highlighting the need to prioritise NCDs and to make significant progress by the 3rd UN High Level Meeting on NCDs (to be held in 2018) if the 25x25 targets are to be achieved.

In particular, the report identified a gap in the WHO NCD framework – namely, how the WHO will report on national commitments on NCDs. To aid this process, a set of **10 process indicators** was published in May ([here >>](#)) – including, for example, whether a ‘Member State has set time-bound national targets and indicators based on WHO guidance’ and has in place measures to reduce demand for tobacco products. More information is available in a C3 news alert [here >>](#).

2.2 Global Coordination Mechanism

The GCM, which is led by member states, was formally established in 2014. Its purpose is to facilitate and enhance the coordination of activities, multistakeholder engagement and action across sectors to contribute to the implementation of the WHO Global NCD Action Plan 2013–2020.

A series of **Dialogues** are being held as part of the GCM, bringing together a wide range of stakeholders to discuss key issues in NCDs. In April, the first was held, on NCDs and development cooperation. 180 people attended, including representatives of Permanent Missions to the UN, NGOs, academics and selected private-sector business associations (although key development actors such as major donors and multilateral agencies were not in attendance). Discussion included making the case for investment in NCDs (moving on from the burden per se to what can actually be done) and how to integrate NCDs into other agendas. More information is available [here >>](#).

The next dialogue – on how to strengthen North–South, South–South and triangular cooperation – will be held at the end of November in Geneva. More information is [here >>](#).

Two **Working Groups** have also been established ([here >>](#)), their aim being to provide recommendations to the WHO director-general on ways and means of encouraging countries to realise the commitments made at the 2011 UN HLM.

- The first Working Group (WG 3.1) is on how to realise governments’ commitments to engage with the private sector for the prevention and control of NCD. Its interim report ([here >>](#)) is open for online consultation until 15 September ([here >>](#)).
- The second Working Group (WG 5.1), on how to realise governments’ commitment to provide financing for NCDs released its interim report – ‘Financing national NCD responses in the post-2015 era’ ([here >>](#))

– to coincide with the Financing for Development Conference (section 1.4 above). It includes five recommendations to address the urgent need substantially to increase financing for NCDs over the next 15 years, particularly if the SDG target on NCDs is to be met by 2030. Domestic resources must play an important role, complemented by increased official development assistance and investment from the private sector. It is open for online consultation until 31 August ([here >>](#)).

The GCM is also running **webinars** on important issues – the first was held in July on the interaction of trade and NCDs (including the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and the Global Action Plan on NCDs, which includes tobacco and alcohol-related issues). The next will be held on 27 August, on investor–state dispute settlement and NCDs (register [here >>](#)).

Finally, a recent GCM **discussion paper** ([here >>](#)) has been published on essential NCD medicines and technologies, including outlining bottlenecks to achieving 80 per cent availability of NCD essential medicines and technologies (target 9 of the NCD Global Action Plan), and how stakeholders can support member states. This is open until 31 August for comment ([here >>](#)).

3. Other international NCD developments

3.1 NCDs at the UN

Progress at UN level on NCDs has been dominated during 2015 by plans for the new Post-2015 Development Agenda (section 1 above).

UN Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of NCDs

The UN Task Force on NCDs was established in 2013 to coordinate the activities of the United Nations and other intergovernmental organisations to support NCD commitments, particularly those made in the WHO Global NCD Action Plan 2013–2020. The Task Force met most recently in February ([here >>](#)).

At ECOSOC (the UN’s Economic and Social Council) in June, a Resolution was passed ([here >>](#)), encouraging scaling up of the delivery of the Task Force’s work plan and enhancing support to member states at national level (such as urging UN teams in each country to set up a ‘resident thematic group’ on NCDs to ensure that they are fully integrated into national health and development planning).

A further progress report was requested next year, ensuring that the Task Force will appear on ECOSOC’s agenda in 2016.

3.2 Selected further international NCD developments

Global NCD Alliance Forum – November 2015

The NCD Alliance will be holding a Global Forum on ‘NCD advocacy and accountability in the post-2015 era’, bringing together the national and regional NCD alliances, and other key stakeholders (the event is by invitation only). It will be held from 13–15 November in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, and will be hosted by Friends of Cancer Patients and the NCD Alliance. More information [here >>](#).

The Forum will focus on:

- advocacy and accountability – translating global commitments into national and regional action;
- organisational development – ensuring that national and regional NCD alliances are well equipped to drive change;
- partnerships for success – linking alliances and partnerships more broadly.

Regional preparatory meetings ahead of the Forum are under way. These will share experiences and challenges, stimulate a multisector approach in the region, explore and nurture national NCD alliances, and identify the main capacity-building needs of each region in NCDs.

WHO Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity

The WHO Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity was established in May 2014 (C3 alert [here >>](#)), and a first draft of its recommendations was published in March ([here >>](#)). The final report is planned for November 2015.

Two ad-hoc working groups ([here >>](#)) have been established to provide the WHO director-general with guidance on the science and evidence for ending childhood obesity and on the implementation, monitoring and accountability frameworks.

2nd International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2)

The ICN2 Rome Declaration and Framework for Action were adopted at the WHA and by the UN on 6 July. The Rome Declaration ([here >>](#)) is a political statement of 10 commitments to eradicate hunger and malnutrition, and create sustainable food systems; the Framework for Action ([here >>](#)) is a set of 60 policy recommendations that draw on existing targets.

A report ([here >>](#)) was published ahead of the WHA on the outcomes of ICN2, particularly addressing how the WHO will provide technical assistance, such as setting national targets and an accountability framework (i.e. how the WHO/Food and Agriculture Organization will report on commitments – the WHA called for two-yearly reporting). The WHO and FAO are working on a joint roadmap for a Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016–25, which will be discussed at the UN in October.

The WHO framework of engagement with non-state actors

Engagement with non-state actors – which is particularly important as tackling NCDs requires a ‘whole of government, whole of society’ approach – continues to be a sticking point in discussions on WHO reform. Points of disagreement include conflict of interest, protecting WHO independence, accountability, and whether engagement with particular industries (notably the food and beverage industry) is appropriate.

Neither the WHO Executive Board in January nor the WHA in May felt able to adopt the proposed text ([here >>](#)), despite negotiations that went on into the night. An intergovernmental working group has now been convened, tasked with finalising the framework ready to be adopted – along with a register of non-state actors – at the next WHA in May 2016.

At the WHA, member states emphasised that they want the framework to be finalised, and that it is important to agree a credible framework – and they also urged non-state actors to continue to work with the WHO in the meantime.

Abbreviations

AAAA: Addis Ababa Action Agenda	GCM: NCD Global Coordination Mechanism	NCDs: non-communicable diseases
ECOSOC: UN’s Economic and Social Council	HLM: UN High-level Meeting	NGO: non-governmental organisation
FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN	HLPF: High-level Political Forum	SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals
FfD3: Third Conference on Financing for Development	IAEG-SDGs: UN interagency expert group on the SDGs	WHA: World Health Assembly
	ICN2: 2 nd International Conference on Nutrition (2014)	WHO: World Health Organization
		UN: United Nations

C3 thanks the [NCD Alliance](#) for its regular excellent webinar updates on international developments in NCDs, without which these state-of-play reports would be very significantly more challenging to compile!