

**Item 7: Political declaration of the third high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (NCDs)**

***Grouping 1: Items 7a, 7d, 7f and 7j***

*Word count: 245 (2 minutes)*

- Tēnā koutou kātoa.
- New Zealand commends the Director-General and the World Health Organisation for its tireless work to address NCDs challenges.
- Every year, NCDs are responsible for approximately seventy percent of deaths globally – heavily impacting low and middle-income countries. We are therefore concerned by reports that progress against NCDs has slowed in the face of COVID-19.
- In our own region, the Pacific, COVID-19 has disrupted action against NCDs. Screening programmes have been postponed, planned treatments cancelled, and many of our neighbours are experiencing a shortage of essential medicines.
- To mitigate this disruption, New Zealand remains committed to supporting Pacific Island countries with scaling up NCD prevention and management by ensuring effective legislation and policy is in place. We must also strengthen primary care services and community initiatives for detection and management of NCDs.
- Turning to the promotion of mental health, we wish to reiterate that improving mental health and wellbeing outcomes remains a priority for New Zealand domestically and abroad. De-stigmatisation of mental health conditions, and increasing access to culturally grounded mental health care in communities, are important next steps.
- It is no secret that COVID-19 will continue to influence our global health agenda for 2022 – but we must not forget the ongoing health challenges presented by NCDs, which pose a huge burden on communities around the globe.
- New Zealand will continue its efforts to combat NCDs, and we look forward to further discussions in this important area at the World Health Assembly in May.