World Health Organization

Executive Board
160th session

Provisional agenda item 7 EB160/8

20 November 2026

Follow-up to the political declaration of the fourth high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases and the promotion of mental health and well-being

Report by the Director-General

Context

1. In response to decisions WHA74(17) (2021) and WHA79(16) (2026), as well as to resolutions WHA57.17 (2004), WHA74.4 (2021), WHA74.5 (2021), WHA78.5 (2025), WHA78.6 (2025) and WHA79.10 (2026), the Director-General hereby submits a consolidated report on progress in implementing the political declaration of the fourth high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases and the promotion of mental health and well-being across several priority areas.

2. The report also describes ongoing work to update the menu of policy options and cost-effective interventions for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases in accordance with decision WHA76(9) (2023).

Situational analysis

3. In 2023, noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) caused 45 million deaths. Eight out of the 10 leading causes of death globally were NCDs: ischaemic heart disease, stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, dementia, diabetes, lung cancer, hypertensive heart disease and kidney diseases. NCDs affect people of all ages. Among people aged under 70 years, NCDs caused 18 million of the 29 million global deaths (62%), more than all other diseases and injuries combined.

4. Sustainable Development Goal target 3.4 commits to a one-third reduction in premature NCD mortality (defined as the risk of dying from one of the four main NCDs between the ages of 30 and 70 years) by 2030. The risk of premature NCD mortality fell from 18.0% in 2015 to 17.2% in

2023, a rate insufficient to meet the target. Although no single region is on track to meet the target, 17 countries are.

5. Premature NCD mortality ranges from 13.6% in the Region of the Americas to 21.9% in the South-East Asia Region. Globally, men are more likely than women to have elevated premature mortality (21.1% versus 13.4%).

6. Risk factor reduction remains essential. Of the 1.4 billion people with hypertension in 2024, only 320 million had it under control.

7. There were 1.2 billion tobacco users in 2024, down from 1.4 billion in 2000; 83% of whom were men.

8. In 2024, 1.1 billion people lived with obesity. The rise in obesity has slowed in some countries and halted in six.

9. In 2022, nearly one third of adults were insufficiently physically active. In 2025, one in four adolescents reported no active days in the previous week. Twenty-two countries are on track to meet the 2030 physical activity target for adults; none are for adolescents.

Work by the Secretariat

Priority areas of work

10. Following adoption of the political declaration of the fourth high-level meeting, WHO advanced four cross-cutting areas of work alongside disease-specific actions: sustainable financing, access to medicines and diagnostics, stronger primary healthcare delivery and revision of the global monitoring framework for NCDs.

11. WHO, the Philippines and the Asian Development Bank will convene the Third International Dialogue on Sustainable Financing for NCDs and Mental Health in early 2027. Expected outcomes include a political declaration and the launch of a Western Pacific initiative on access to NCD medicines. In preparation, WHO will finalize a practical guide for sustainable financing for NCDs and mental health.

12. WHO is developing an operational framework on access to NCD medicines in primary healthcare to support forecasting, planning and sustainable access to essential NCD medicines and diagnostics.

13. Building on the WHO Package of Essential NCD interventions (PEN), WHO is developing the second iteration: integrated NCD service delivery through a health systems strengthening approach. This initiative will provide modular, life-course adapted guidance on strengthening the health systems functions and capacities required to deliver integrated, quality NCD services through primary healthcare.

14. WHO has expanded its work on the integration of NCD promotion, prevention and care into emergency preparedness and response. Nine countries have incorporated NCDs into planning instruments and developed NCD-integrated public health situation analyses, and four have established NCD emergency kits, reviews or coordination mechanisms.

15. WHO is also revising the global monitoring framework for NCDs to align with commitments in the political declaration of the fourth high-level meeting.

Work in the regions

16. In the **African Region**, the PEN-Plus regional strategy for managing severe NCDs has been implemented in 20 Member States, reaching over 170 000 people. Rwanda became the first country to achieve national coverage. In parallel, PEN is implemented at the primary care level in 31 Member States.

17. The African Region's Women's Integrated Cancer Services initiative has reached more than 22 000 women in Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya and Zimbabwe, and WHO has published guidance on the evaluation and workup of suspected breast cancer through a primary healthcare approach.

18. The SPECS 2030 initiative is accelerating access to integrated, people-centred eye care to address refractive errors in nine countries across the African Region. For example, in Kenya, implementing partners have screened more than 1.5 million people and dispensed over 120 000 pairs of eyeglasses since the launch of SPECS 2030 in May 2024.

19. In the **Region of the Americas**, WHO/PAHO supported 15 countries in integrating NCD services into primary healthcare as part of the Better Care for NCDs initiative. More than 360 000 certificates were issued through the initiative's learning pathway and country experiences were documented in 17 peer-reviewed articles.

20. The Global Hearts Initiative continues across 14 000 primary healthcare centres. Diabetes quality of care was improved through new clinical pathways developed in 12 countries. Human papillomavirus testing for cervical cancer screening was supported in eight countries. Progress was made on tobacco control in four countries, essential to achieving a fully smoke-free Latin America. Moreover, 16 countries and territories initiated or accelerated regulations on sodium reduction and elimination of industrially produced trans-fatty acids.

21. In the **South-East Asia Region**, WHO advanced integrated NCD care by strengthening diabetic retinopathy screening and diabetes management in pregnancy, expanding capacity-building for evidence-based stroke care, and piloting primary healthcare models for chronic respiratory diseases, while developing a chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and asthma technical package. Member States progressed in integrating physical activity promotion into national NCD plans and in improving policy and regulatory environments for healthy diets.

22. WHO efforts in the Region also focused on phasing out dental amalgam and developing essential oral healthcare packages. Through decision SEA/RC78(7) (2025), the Regional Committee requested the Regional Director to support Member States in their efforts to achieve the SEAHEARTS 2030 milestones, including treatment and control of hypertension and diabetes, tobacco control, salt reduction and elimination of industrially produced trans-fatty acids. The South-East Asia Cancer Grid continued strengthening regional cancer control through knowledge-sharing, technical collaboration and capacity-building.

23. In the **Western Pacific Region**, WHO supported countries to advance NCD prevention through policy action and health systems strengthening. On tobacco, WHO responded to uneven mid-term regional progress with best buy support, yielding new legislation, tax increases and stronger regulation of emerging nicotine products. Through resolution WPR/RC76.R4 (2025), the Regional Committee called for country action on alcohol taxation and pricing measures,

marketing, and national policies, legislation and regulatory frameworks. WHO accelerated action on health taxes through capacity-building, trained healthcare providers in integrated obesity prevention and management, and strengthened risk factor data use to inform policies.

24. WHO supported Member States in the Region to strengthen integrated NCD services through primary healthcare, focusing on hypertension management, including implementation of the regional road map towards the 80-80-80 targets. Cervical cancer elimination was advanced and access to medicines for children with cancer expanded. Across the Region, oral health integration was promoted, and implementation tools and training resources developed, while the SPECS 2030 initiative has improved access to integrated eye care services.

Updating the menu of policy options and cost-effective interventions

25. WHO is updating the menu of policy options and cost-effective interventions for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases to reflect current evidence and guidance. The update is aligned with WHO costing and economic analyses supporting progressive realization of universal health coverage ahead of the 2027 high-level meeting on universal health coverage. This will strengthen investment cases and help countries to prioritize and finance the most cost-effective NCD interventions within national universal health coverage benefit packages.

Cancer

26. WHO and the International Agency for Research on Cancer launched the *Global status report on cancer 2026: the future we choose together*. WHO supports about 100 countries in respect of cancer through the Global Initiative for Childhood Cancer, the Cervical Cancer Elimination Initiative, the Global Breast Cancer Initiative and beyond.

Oral health

27. WHO continues implementation of the Global Oral Health Action Plan. In 2026, it published guidance on environmentally friendly, less invasive caries care,[1] supporting sustainable oral health services and the Minamata Convention on Mercury. Additional publications addressed oral health equity for persons with disabilities[2] and noma control.[3]

28. The Global Coalition on Oral Health was launched on the sidelines of the Seventy-ninth World Health Assembly in May 2026. It supports integration of essential oral health services into primary healthcare and universal health coverage benefit packages in 23 countries and territories in South-East Asia and the Western Pacific. A global consultation in 2027 will review progress and priorities to 2030.

[1] WHO guideline on environmentally friendly and less invasive oral health care for preventing and managing dental caries. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2025.

[2] Oral health equity for persons with disabilities: a policy brief. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2026.

[3] Ending the neglect to attain the Sustainable Development Goals: noma control: technical brief. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2026.

Strengthening prevention and control of diabetes

29. Since the adoption of resolution WHA74.4 (2021) by the Seventy-fourth World Health Assembly, the Global Diabetes Compact has supported countries to progress towards diabetes coverage targets while coordinating action through the Global Diabetes Compact Forum, with more than 180 non-State actors, and celebrating World Diabetes Day.

30. In 2026, WHO published its first guideline on insulin use for adults with type 1 diabetes, including in humanitarian settings, and developed a therapeutic patient education curriculum. Additional guidance included diabetes prevention, management and screening across the life course, including updated type 2 diabetes management guidelines and guidance on diagnosis and screening during pregnancy.

Global strategy on diet, physical activity and health

31. WHO has strengthened support for implementation of the global action plan on physical activity. As at 2023, 96 countries reported national guidelines and more than 30 had formally adopted WHO recommendations.

32. On physical activity, WHO advanced a monitoring framework and the related global status report, while expanding implementation support through ACTIVE toolkits, training and technical assistance. Regional plans, capacity-building and partnerships have further advanced implementation.

33. Despite progress, the world is not on track to achieve a 15% reduction in physical inactivity by 2030. Accelerated multisectoral action, investment and continued policy implementation are needed.

Strengthening prevention and control of kidney disease

34. Following the adoption of resolution WHA78.6 (2025) by the Seventy-eighth World Health Assembly, WHO is advancing its work on kidney disease within the broader NCD response, particularly alongside diabetes and cardiovascular diseases, emphasizing integrated prevention, management of shared risk factors, coordinated care pathways and stronger health systems.

Promoting and prioritizing an integrated lung health approach

35. Following the adoption of resolution WHA78.5 (2025) by the Seventy-eighth World Health Assembly, WHO mapped existing frameworks across lung diseases and risk factors, identifying three priority approaches: earlier detection through integrated screening and diagnosis; integrated interventions to promote and protect lung health through risk factor reduction; and person-centred care spanning management, rehabilitation and palliative care.

Reducing the burden of stroke

36. Following the adoption of resolution WHA79.10 (2026) by the Seventy-ninth World Health Assembly, WHO is advancing integrated stroke prevention, acute care, rehabilitation and health systems readiness. Through the Global Hearts Initiative, WHO supports over 40 countries to improve hypertension management. WHO also promotes organized stroke care through its framework for the care of acute coronary syndrome and stroke, covering awareness, emergency response, diagnosis, treatment, referral, rehabilitation and secondary prevention.

United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition

37. The United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016–2025) was extended to 2030 through United Nations General Assembly resolution 79/276, aligning it with the 2030 Agenda. While progress remains off track for most nutrition and hunger targets, the extension builds on momentum from the Nutrition for Growth Summit and preparations for the second United Nations Food Systems Summit Stocktaking Moment. Through its resolution 79/276, the General Assembly calls upon FAO and WHO to continue to lead and monitor the implementation of the Decade.

Action by the Executive Board

38. The Board is invited to note the report and provide guidance to the Secretariat in respect of the following questions.

- How can the Secretariat best support Member States in the implementation across priority areas of the updated menu of policy options and cost-effective interventions for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases and the promotion of mental health?

- When updating the menu of policy options and cost-effective interventions, how can the Secretariat best support Member States to develop investment cases, and prioritize and finance the most cost-effective NCD interventions within national universal health coverage benefit packages?
