

## **EB158: Western Pacific Region Statement on Agenda Item 6**

### **Follow-up to the political declaration of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases**

●Chair, Distinguished Delegates, Excellencies, and Colleagues,

On behalf of the Western Pacific Region, I extend my profound appreciation honor to deliver the WPRO group statement on the challenges of addressing the burden of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) and mental health and well-being.

●Firstly, we would like to thank the WHO for the updates provided in this report. As a region, we appreciate and support the renewed global drive and commitment to improve the prevention and control of NCDs, but we also take note that unfortunately global progress has stagnated and in some cases, progress has reversed.

●In our region, NCDs account for more than 80% of all deaths—among the highest proportions globally. With rapid population ageing and catalysed by increasing healthcare costs, both prevalence and mortality are projected to increase further. This is a global concern confronting all our regions in the years ahead.

●In this context, we reaffirm the importance of achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) as a foundation for tackling NCDs including but not limited to cancers, diabetes, cardio- and cerebro-vascular diseases, respiratory diseases and mental health and well-being. Our shared agenda is to accelerate the development of a seamless continuum of care—encompassing prevention, promotion, early detection, treatment, rehabilitation, and long-term care—anchored by strong, high-quality, equitable and resilient primary health care (PHC). We must prioritize investments in evidence-based and cost-effective interventions, including traditional medicine and technology innovation that will result in the greatest health impact and outcome.

●Additionally, as highlighted in the Secretariat report, the high burden of oral diseases and their shared risk factors with NCDs make oral health a cross-cutting issue for both NCDs and healthy ageing. Guided by the WHO Global Oral Health Strategy and Action Plan 2023–2030 and the Bangkok Declaration in 2024, we are advancing a regional implementation plan to strengthen policies, integrate oral health within PHC and UHC, expand workforce capacity, and scale up prevention.

●Furthermore, advancing NCDs and mental health and well-being responses requires sustained systems capable of delivering continuous care, based on sustainable and resilient health financing. Therefore, we welcome the initiatives of the UHC Knowledge Hub by WHO and the World Bank, which was established last year, as well as other national, regional, global initiatives and institutions that contribute to the

achievement of UHC. Addressing the rising future demand associated with population ageing, stronger collaboration between the health and finance sectors is urgently needed to strategically allocate limited resources toward strong PHC and achieving UHC. In parallel, sustainable health system must be supported by cultivating technical capabilities and a skilled workforce. In this regard, we highlight the role of WHO in empowering Member States through initiatives such as the Global Training Hub for Biomanufacturing. We commit to monitor progress, share lessons learned through various platforms, and translate agreed actions into tangible improvements at regional and country levels.

● Finally, we join other Member States in welcoming the adoption of the political declaration of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on NCDs, mental health and well-being. We particularly welcome the inclusion of mental health alongside NCDs, for the first time since the first political declaration on NCDs was adopted in 2011, and the recognition of the importance of fully respecting human rights, including the rights of Indigenous Peoples, in line with national contexts, in the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases and the promotion of mental health and wellbeing. for the first time since the first political declaration on NCDs was adopted in 2011.

● Under the western pacific regional vision of “Weaving Health”—strengthening the health of families, communities, and societies—we will continue to advance progress with solidarity and transparency, together with partners within and beyond our region.

We look forward to ongoing knowledge-sharing and collective action across Member States.

Thank you.