GOUVERNEMENT DE LA
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MINISTERE DE LA SANTE

GOVERNMENT
OF THE
REPUBLIC OF VANUATU

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

MINISTER OF HEALTH

SEVENTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY (RESUMED SESSION-VIRTUAL)

24 May – 1 June 2021

AGENDA ITEM 13.2 Political declaration of the third high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases

The Government of Vanuatu is committed to achieving SDG targets 3.4 (reduce premature mortality due to NCD by 33%) and 3.8 (UHC) by 2030 as defined within the Vanuatu National Sustainable Development Plan or 'People's Plan'.

According to the Vanuatu NCD Country Profile from 2018, 74% of premature deaths occur due to NCDs. Vanuatu is committed to reducing NCDs with an emphasis on obesity, hypertension and diabetes as well as preventing complications of hypertension and diabetes such as diabetic related lower-limb amputations.
In recent years, the MoH Vanuatu has made some progress towards reducing the impact of NCDs with support from the WHO and partners.

By applying a multi-sectoral approach, the Government of Vanuatu has applied the WHO 'Best buys' policies. In November 2019, the Parliament of Vanuatu endorsed the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade of Tobacco products. This year, they have increased taxes for tobacco products and are also promoting consumption of juices from natural tropical fruits and vegetables by taxing industrial sugar-sweetened beverages. Vanuatu also endorsed a Policy to ban Heated Tobacco Products including Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS).
Vanuatu also introduced the WHO NCD PEN or 'Package of Essential Non-Communicable Diseases Interventions tool' as early as in 2012 which has been widely implemented in all provinces. PEN is being actively used during outreach services across islands and has contributed to strengthening prevention, early detection and management of NCDs.

The WHO Mental health Gap Action Program (MhGAP) and Psychosocial Support (PSS) toolkits were introduced in 2014. The toolkits were initially used by designated mental health doctors and nurses but their use has been expanded to provincial non-mental health nurses to improve their capacity for early identification of common symptoms of mental health disorders and to promote timely referral and management of mental health disorders.

However, these efforts are only the beginning. Vanuatu along with other Member States in WPRO have adopted the "For the Future" vision. Our goal is to make the Western Pacific the world's healthiest and safest region. NCDs and ageing are thematic focus areas for 2019-2023.

It is crucial to address social and environmental determinants of health at the population, community and individual levels and to promote NCD services. There is a way to establish

safe environments and healthy behaviours and settings across the life-course through families, schools, workplaces and cities that promote good health (wellness). Mental health issues should be addressed through psychosocial support (PSS) and maintain essential services for mental health and NCDs amid COVID-19.

Thus, Vanuatu, guided by this Vision and to achieve National Society Goal 3, would like to solicit further support from WHO as expressed below.

First, support in adopting WHO technical packages such as SAFER, SHAKE, REPLACE, ACTIVE, HEARTS, MhGAP, LIVE LIFE and SAVE LIVES to Vanuatu context and integrating into the nursing curriculum.

Second, assist in integrating prevention and control of NCDs and mental health into the primary health care package.

Third, assist in revisions to the current mental health law which is to be respectful of human-rights and increase orientation towards promoting community-based mental health services

Fourth, support for improving NCD data, in particular, NCD patient monitoring to be an integral part of the overall Health Information System

Fifth, **s**upport reviews of the cancer screening program and development of a cancer registry.

To end, the Government of Vanuatu expresses sincere appreciation for the insulin supplied in 2020 by Novo Nordisk Company under the auspice of WHO to assist in maintaining essential services in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.