

Honourable Chair, Director-General, Excellences and colleagues,

Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement delivered by Belgium on behalf of the EU and its Member States. We reaffirm the commitment to addressing the challenge of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) through concerted action at the national, regional, and global levels.

Today, we gather to address a silent epidemic that is gripping our communities, affecting millions worldwide, and yet often goes unnoticed in the public discourse. I'm speaking of NCDs, the chronic illnesses that are not passed from person to person but exact a heavy toll on individuals, families, and societies alike. While infectious diseases often dominate the headlines, NCDs silently ravage communities, affecting individuals of all ages, backgrounds, and socioeconomic statuses. They undermine the health and well-being of millions, imposing immense burdens on families, healthcare systems, and economies.

Collaboration between governments, healthcare professionals, researchers, and civil society organizations is essential to drive progress in this area.

Republic of Bulgaria highly appreciates the efforts of the WHO and the UN to prioritize the prevention and control of chronic non-communicable diseases, including oral health, in the context of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The goals and perspectives presented in the documents align with the values and principles of policies and current health priorities in our country.

The Ministry of Health of the Republic of Bulgaria pursues a long-standing policy on the prevention of non-communicable diseases by adopting and implementing a National Programs for the Prevention of Non-Communicable Diseases (2021-2025), as a continuation of the one for 2014-2020. It is in line with the goals of WHO's NCD Global Monitoring Framework, and is being implemented according to the specifics of our country and with the main goal to improve the health of the population and increase the quality of life by reducing premature mortality, morbidity and disability. The program includes activities and initiatives aimed at limiting the risk factors, early detection, monitoring and evaluation of the spread of the leading NCDs. A number of state institutions, non-governmental organizations, representatives of civil society and the private sector are involved in the implementation of the multi-sectoral measures for the prevention and control of NCDs.

Prevention must be our foremost priority. By promoting healthy lifestyles and addressing the root causes of NCDs, we can stem the tide of this epidemic. This requires comprehensive strategies.

Let us stand together in solidarity, determined to build a healthier, more resilient future for ourselves and generations to come.

In closing, let us remember that the fight against NCDs is not one that we can afford to lose. It requires sustained commitment, collaboration, and collective action. Together, we can build a healthier future, free from the burden of non-communicable diseases.

Thank you!