

Committee A

Agenda Item 11.2: Follow-up to the political declaration of the third high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases

Delegation: Grenada

Grenada's delegation is honored to address the 77th World Health Assembly on the critical issue of prevention and control of non-communicable diseases.

Chronic non-communicable diseases are the leading cause of death in Grenada with cancers, cardiovascular diseases and diabetes occupying the top positions. Managing these conditions currently consumes a large and growing proportion of health expenditure. Mental health and substance use disorders also affect a sizable part of the population. The COVID-19 pandemic uncovered the hidden mental health epidemic and made bare the need for more to be done to address the suffering many experienced with these conditions.

As it relates to our approach to mental health, several challenges exist including centralization of services and their lack of integration into primary health care, aging infrastructure, limited in-country human resource capacity to address the mental health needs of the population, and the reliance on outdated treatments.

It was necessary for the Government to act to address the mental health care situation facing the country. This began at the highest political level with the creation of a Ministry for Mental Health and Wellness, with the assignment of a Minister and Director with special responsibility for mental health and substance abuse. Additional actions included the updating of Grenada's mental health policy and legislation, human resource capacity building to manage patients with mental health issues and addressing the physical facility issues. Other notable efforts include the promotion of general wellness and physical fitness through the introduction of wellness breaks for health employees and signature activities such as "Grenada Shifts".

Overall, Grenada's approach to prevention and control of non-communicable diseases include: The engagement of strategic partners, adoption of evidence-based standards and methods, full integration of mental health services into primary health care, ensuring access to essential medicines and technology, and digitization of the health information system.

We are grateful to PAHO/WHO for its ongoing support to Grenada as we progressively adapt and implement these and other health system strengthening measures.

The Government of Grenada remains steadfast in its mission to enact the necessary reforms to improve the health of our citizens.

Thank you