

Committee A- Pillar 1: One Billion people benefiting from Universal Health Coverage (UHC)

Agenda Item 12: The role of the global coordination mechanism on the prevention and control of NCDs in WHO's work on multistakeholder engagement for the prevention and control of NCDs: Report on independent Evaluation (Document: A78/INF./2)

Thank you, Chairperson.

1. The **Kingdom of Tonga** is pleased to note the Report: ***Document: A78/INF./2- The role of the global coordination mechanism on the prevention and control of NCDs etc.***
2. The people and Government of **Tonga** greatly value the leadership and coordination that **WHO** provides for addressing NCDs as 83% of deaths in Tonga are from NCDs.
3. The global NCD burden and the urgency of promoting mental health and well-being and screening for and treating cancer are no longer just a health system problem.
4. Recent achievements for addressing NCDs in Tonga include:
 - a. A national NCD Forum conducted in Nov 2024 with the aim of strengthening multi-sectoral and stakeholders' engagement and collaboration.
 - b. Establishing a national NCD Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Taskforce to improve monitoring and coordination capacity.
 - c. Establishment of the MOH NCD Steering Committee – to oversee and improve coordination of NCD health services including strengthening M&E, data management and reporting efforts.
 - d. Piloting the transformation of the Primary Healthcare system at a Health Clinic to become a 'Super Clinic' for more integrated healthcare services at community level.
 - e. Developing a Cervical Cancer Policy; and
 - f. Developing a Mental Health Policy and Strategic Plan.
5. There is a lot more work to be done and WHO can best support Tonga to address some of our key priorities including:

- a. Strengthen community engagement and collaboration at community level, to enhance UHC by reaching the unreached, including women and girls, people with a disability and our youth and vulnerable populations.
 - b. More effective case management, early detection and treatment.
 - c. National health screening for NCDs with active and timely referrals.
 - d. Medical specialists outreach programs to outer islands.
 - e. Review of the Essential Drugs List to make essential NCD medications available at community health centers.
 - f. Maintain NCD patients' care and management during emergencies.
 - g. Strengthen NCD surveillance through better data collection and management.
 - h. Review and develop evidence based public health policies to encourage a supportive environment for NCD prevention, treatment and control.
6. Interventions need to include taxes and bans on advertising for tobacco and alcohol, reformulation policies for healthier food and drinks and the promotion and support of optimal breastfeeding practices.
 7. We need to secure more sustainable funding, have better civic dialogue, provide more accurate public information, and do better long-term planning to facilitate the implementation of the national NCD Strategy.
 8. We need to explore innovative ways of improving health literacy among our people through the provision of health promotion training programs for teachers, faith-based leaders and the police.
 9. We need to strengthen partnership with development partners and the private sector to provide avenues for good governance and leadership, health system strengthening and workforce development.
 10. Tonga commits to continuing to work with **WHO** and development partners as we need your support to renew and reinforce efforts to addressing NCD challenges – through stronger whole-of-government and whole-of society collaboration, by exploring more sustainable financing mechanisms, and by tackling the underlying social, economic, commercial and environmental drivers of risk and inequities.

MALO 'AUPITO AND THANK YOU

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