

Draft 1

Seventy-eight World Health Assembly Kingdom of Tonga Intervention

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

Agenda Item 13: Review and update on matters considered by the Executive Board

Agenda Item 13.1: Follow up to the political declaration of the 3rd high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of NCDs

Dot Point 4: Global Strategy to accelerate the elimination of cervical cancer as a public health problem and its associated goals and targets for the period 2020-2030 (Resolution WHA 73.2 (2020))

Thank you, Chairperson.

1. **The Kingdom of Tonga is pleased to support: *The Global Strategy to accelerate the elimination of cervical cancer- (Resolution WHA 73.2 (2020)) and supports the decision for a World Cervical Cancer Elimination Day.***
2. The Government and people of Tonga greatly value the leadership and coordination that **WHO** provides in addressing the burden of NCDs.
3. Cancers tend to be side-lined under the NCD Banner and much work needs to be done to address the burden of cancer, which is one of the top four causes of death in Tonga at 19%.
4. Cervical cancer is a significant health issue in Tonga, where high rates of morbidity and mortality have been reported.
5. Contributing factors include limited access to screening and vaccination, socio-economic disparities and cultural beliefs.
6. **WHO** has set a global goal to eliminate cervical cancer, recognizing that local adaptations are necessary to meet the unique needs of individual countries.
7. One of our recent achievements in Tonga has been the development of a Cervical Cancer Policy and Strategy, a Regional Program funded by Swire Shipping's sponsorship and Kirby Institute collaboration.
8. The primary objective of this Policy and Strategy is to eliminate cervical cancer as a public health problem in Tonga through a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach that includes prevention, early detection, treatment and support.

9. Key Components of the Strategy include:
 - a. Implementing a nationwide Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination program targeting young girls aged 10-14 years.
 - b. Establishing a cervical cancer screening program using innovative technologies such as self-sampling and HPV testing.
 - c. Enhancing access to 100% effective treatment and follow-up care for women diagnosed with cervical pre-cancer.
 - d. Launching community awareness campaigns about the importance of vaccination, screening, and early detection.
 - e. Engaging local leaders and influencers to promote cervical health and tackle stigma associated with the disease.
 - f. Developing a comprehensive data collection system to monitor progress, identify gaps, and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
 - g. Advocating for the integration of cervical cancer control into national health policies and ensure sustainable funding mechanisms.
 - h. Engaging in regional and global discussions to mobilize resources and share best practices.
10. Expected Outcome include:
 - a. A significant reduction in the incidence and mortality of cervical cancer in Tonga.
 - b. Increased awareness and understanding of cervical health among women, girls and communities; and
 - c. A sustainable healthcare system that provides equitable access to preventative services and treatment.
11. Tonga has the potential to significantly reduce the burden of cervical cancer and improve the health outcomes of women nationwide.
12. The elimination of cervical cancer in Tonga is an achievable goal with coordinated efforts and strategic investment in prevention, early detection, and treatment.
13. With support from **WHO**, UNICEF, development partners, committed local leadership, and stakeholder engagement, we hope to share resources, expertise, and have funding available for cervical cancer initiatives that focus on education and access.

MALO 'AUPATIO AND THANK YOU

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