



**Republic of the Gambia
Ministry of Health
The Quadrangle
Banjul**

SEVENTY-NINTH WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

STATEMENT OF THE MINISTER, GENEVA 2026

Agenda Item: 12.1	Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases
Documents	Documents A79/5, A79/INF./6 and EB158/2026/REC/1, resolution EB158.R1, decisions EB158(1) and EB158(2)
Requested action	Note the report and adopt resolution EB158.R1, decisions EB158(1) and EB158(2)
Time limit:	2 Minutes
Commission	A

Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of The Gambia, I align fully with regional statements and thank the Director-General for the comprehensive report on the follow-up to the Political Declaration on the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases. We also welcome the adoption of resolution EB158.R1.

We note with concern that, although global mortality from noncommunicable diseases has declined, progress has slowed in recent years and significant inequities persist. These disparities disproportionately affect low- and middle-income countries, including those in sub-Saharan Africa. In The Gambia, NCDs now account for a growing share of morbidity and premature mortality, co-existing with the unfinished agenda of communicable diseases and exerting increasing pressure on our health system and development objectives.

In response, The Gambia is strengthening prevention and control efforts through the implementation of our National NCD Strategic Plan, aligned with the WHO Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of NCDs 2013–2030. Our priorities focus

on reducing exposure to key modifiable risk factors, including tobacco use, harmful use of alcohol, unhealthy diets, and physical inactivity, through evidence-based policies, legislation, and sustained community engagement.

We are integrating NCD prevention, screening, and management—including hypertension, diabetes, cancers, and emerging conditions such as steatotic liver disease—into primary health care and universal health coverage reforms. Steatotic liver disease is an emerging public health concern in The Gambia, closely linked to rising cardiometabolic risk factors, including obesity, sedentary lifestyles, unhealthy diets, and alcohol use. Its integration into the broader NCD agenda is therefore timely and essential.

Investments are being made to strengthen surveillance systems, including the STEPwise approach to NCD risk factor surveillance, enhance health workforce capacity, and improve referral pathways to ensure continuity of care, particularly for vulnerable and high-risk populations.

The Gambia welcomes WHO's continued leadership and technical support to address inequities, promote multisectoral action, and strengthen accountability. We urge the use of existing WHO guidance, fostering collaboration with partners and civil society, mobilizing resources for research, and ensuring equitable access to essential diagnostics and medicines.

In conclusion, we reaffirm our commitment to working with WHO and all partners to accelerate progress on NCD prevention and control, protect our populations, and improve health outcomes for all Gambians.

We urge the Assembly to note the report.