

WHA79

May 18-23, 2026

Lebanon Statement on:

Item 12.1 (Follow-up to the political declaration of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases), and

Item 12.2 (Mental Health)

Esteemed Chair, Respectful Delegates,

NCD account for 55% of total deaths in Lebanon, and 37% of NCD deaths are premature. The NCD risk factors present scary figures. A meagre 1.4% of the population doesn't have any NCD risk factor. 52.1% are current smokers, fruit and vegetable consumption remains critically low, salt intake is almost double the WHO recommended levels, 32% of the adult population is obese, 34% suffer from hypertension and 36% are physically inactive.

We are aware that intensive work on curbing NCD risk factors should be strengthened. Not only awareness campaigns on the importance of healthy diets, and physical activity, but also the early detection of cancer and the amendment of the tobacco control law to include new products is believed to have strong effects on smoking prevalence especially among the youth. Yet, Lebanon believes that innovative efforts are needed to accelerate the work towards 2030. We call for integrating Artificial Intelligence into NCD prevention and early detection such as predictive analytics for early detection using certain biomarkers and individualized risk scores, as well as smart food scanners to help make healthier choices.

In Mental health, more than a quarter of the Lebanese population suffer from clinical depression. Lebanon built an investment case for the integration of community-based mental health services and is currently studying the reform of legislations on mental health. Two months ago, a decree was issued to make the emotional support and the suicide prevention hotline toll free. For the last decade Lebanon has been building on the momentum of the response to a cascade of humanitarian crises through a build back better model following the WHO global action plan on mental health. Lebanon, thus, showed a successful example of health system strengthening approach during crisis.

Finally, data remains the key element to ensure that relevant indicators are properly measured to monitor progress. We are aware that there is a global funding scarcity, but in view of the increasing NCD burden including mental stressors and the escalating worldwide conflicts, we call for keeping the needed attention for NCD and mental health, especially the metrics of program performance and progress in NCD and mental health indicators.

Thank you