Key mission findings

1. Oman is strongly positioned to move forward on NCDs: a) There is a strong political and technical commitment and increasing understanding of the need of action in different government ministries; b) Frameworks and coordination mechanisms are in place (e.g. Health Vision 2050, National NCD Policy, draft plan of action, inter-ministerial NCD Committee); and c) There is a willingness of non-State actors to support government.

2. The National Committee on NCDs has significant potential to coordinate and lead the NCDs response in Oman with support from Cabinet.

3. Achievements include tobacco control and salt reduction in bread. There is a need to progress policies that encourage healthy diets and physical activity.

4. Oman has a strong health system with a focus on universal health coverage and primary health care, including a national programme for detecting NCDs.

5. Labelling for fat, types of fat, sugar, and salt are implemented since 2015.

"We simply cannot afford the costs of people becoming ill from NCDs at a young age."

Dr Ahmed Mohammed Al-Saidi
Minister of Health of Oman

Key adult NCD mortality and risk factors*

- Probability of premature mortality from NCDs: 18% (2016)
- 28% of adult men and 38% of adult women are insufficiently physically active
- 7% of adult men and 8% of adult women have raised fasting blood glucose (2014)
- 17% of adult men and 15% of adult women have raised blood pressure (2015)
- 16% of men and 0.4% of women (aged >= 15 years) smoke tobacco (2015)
- 54% of adult men and 61% of adult women are overweight (2016)
- Pure alcohol per capita consumption: 0.8 litres per year (population 15+, 2016)
- Fruit and vegetable consumption: 30% of non-pregnant women aged 15-49 years consume fruits more than twice per day and 29.1% of them consume vegetables more than twice per day (2017)
Adding value: actions taken following the mission

1. A detailed 5-year National Plan of Action was finalized and launched in February 2018.

2. The UN Theme Group on NCDs was established. The work plan for 2018 was outlined after the launch of the National Plan of Action and will be further detailed following the launch of the results of the Nutrition Survey.

3. A GCC regulation on trans-fats was adopted by the Government of Oman.

4. A three-step (50% each time) increase on tobacco tax was approved so the final taxes on tobacco should be not less than 70% of retail price.

5. The decision to increase the customs duty for tobacco from 100% to 150% is currently applied.

6. The following policies are under consideration by the GCC: removal of subsidies for unhealthy foods, a 50% tax on sugary drinks and a 100% tax on energy drinks.

7. A one-year Campaign on Physical Activity was launched on 27 December 2016 and has been successfully conducted.

8. A National Nutrition Survey was started in November 2016 and the results of the study were launched in March 2018.

9. Data collection for the National NCD STEP Survey was initiated in January 2017 and has been completed. The results are being verified for further analysis and for the writing of the report. The launch is planned for fall 2018.

Key recommendations

1. The draft national multisectoral action plan on NCDs should be finalized and costed.

2. An NCD investment case should be conducted.

3. The National Committee on NCDs should be a whole-of-government body that is be supported by a high level Health Council.

4. Import taxes for tobacco products should be converted into (domestic) excise taxes and should be significantly increased in conjunction with the Gulf Cooperation Council.

5. Subsidies for unhealthy foods (salt, sugar, palm oil) should be replaced with healthy ones (fruit and vegetable and healthy oils). Labelling requirements for food and beverages rich in salt, sugar or unhealthy fats should be implemented.

Next steps

1. The WHO has supported Oman through a number of missions and through assistance to develop the NCD Action Plan. Further support will be offered with respect to the costing of the plan and to strengthen NCD surveillance.

2. Multisectoral Initiatives are either under-way (e.g. healthy city-healthy islands) or being conceptualized (e.g. leveraging food systems for better health and nutrition, etc.).

3. Service availability and readiness assessment (SARA) survey to be conducted.

4. Multi sector workshop is planned in October 2018 to develop plans of action based on the national nutrition results and recommendations.

5. A national tobacco control legislation to be endorsed.

Additional information on the status of NCDs in Oman can be found on the WHO NCD DataFinder app.