



World Health
Organization

“IT’S TIME TO WALK THE TALK”

WHO INDEPENDENT HIGH-LEVEL COMMISSION ON NONCOMMUNICABLE DISEASES - SUMMARY

Despite the many proven interventions and commitments to combat NCDs, progress has been slow and uneven globally. The WHO Independent High-level Commission on NCDs was convened by the WHO Director-General in October 2017 to advise him on how countries can accelerate progress towards SDG target 3.4 on NCDs and mental health.

The Commission’s first report included six recommendations for governments, civil society and the private sector. The Commission’s second and final report includes eight recommendations for WHO.

In 2017, WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus established the WHO Independent High-level Commission on Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs) as a political tool to achieve the NCD-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets by 2030 as part of a wider approach to reach the health-related SDGs.

The Commission was charged with identifying innovative ways to curb the world’s biggest causes of death and extend life expectancy for millions of people, in particular, to support political efforts to accelerate action on cardiovascular disease, cancers, diabetes and respiratory disease, to reduce suffering from mental health conditions, and to reduce the number of premature deaths from NCDs attributed to air pollution.

The Commission’s first report, *Time to Deliver*, published in June 2018, comprised six major recommendations for Heads of State and Government, civil society, and private sector,

The Commission’s second and final report, *It’s time to walk the talk*, published in December 2019, comprises eight recommendations for WHO. This document summarizes the top-level recommendations. For further details, please see the full text of the report at www.who.int/ncds/governance/high-level-commission/en.

1. WHO should encourage Heads of State and Government to fulfil their commitment to provide strategic leadership for NCD responses by promoting policy coherence and coordination for the development of whole-of-government, health-

in-all-policies approaches and for the engagement of stakeholders in whole-of-society action in line with national NCD and SDG action plans and targets, including through the establishment of national multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder mechanisms.

2. WHO should support countries in their national efforts to empower individuals to make healthy choices and make the healthiest choice the easiest choice, including through the creation of enabling environments and the promotion of health literacy. Policy, legislative, and regulatory measures that reduce exposure to risk factors for NCDs and mental health conditions and promote healthy choices can be complemented by health literacy approaches.
3. WHO should encourage countries to invest in the prevention and control of NCDs and mental health conditions as a key opportunity to enhance human capital and accelerate economic growth. The promise of Universal Health Coverage is more likely to be realized if the connection between NCDs and mental health conditions and human capital is appreciated.
4. WHO must advise countries to make NCDs and mental health conditions essential components of Universal Health Coverage and affordable health services for all. They should prioritize policies and interventions implemented through social protection, primary healthcare, essential

public health functions, investment in the health workforce, and increased accountability, that will enable speedier progress to SDG 3.4.

5. WHO should promote social protection for all to ensure equity and economic security in the prevention and control of NCDs, including protection against catastrophic health expenditures for care.
6. WHO should increase its engagement with the private sector to promote their effective and meaningful contribution to global NCDs targets and goals, and to provide technical support to Member States to increase the capacity needed for such engagements to national NCD responses.
7. WHO should encourage governments to promote meaningful engagement with civil society for the prevention and control of NCDs and the promotion of mental health.
8. WHO should advocate for the establishment of a multi-donor trust fund (MDTF) for NCDs and mental health conditions based on public health needs.

The second report builds on the outcomes of three working groups, each of which aimed to address several issues related to implementation of the recommendations contained in the first report and the 2018 *Political declaration of the third high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases*.

The three working groups addressed the following questions:

- **Working group 1:** How to increase health literacy about NCDs and their risk factors, and promote multisectoral and multi-stakeholder mechanisms to accelerate national efforts towards SDG target 3.4.
- **Working group 2:** How to make the global push in 2019 to include NCDs and mental health in Universal Health Coverage benefit packages in support of national efforts towards SDG target 3.4?
- **Working group 3:** How to engage constructively with the private sector towards SDG target 3.4?

The reports of the three working groups are also available at www.who.int/ncds/governance/high-level-commission/en.

