

NCD Alliance Advocacy Briefing: 71st UN General Assembly September 2016

BACKGROUND

The first UN General Assembly since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides an opportunity for the non-communicable disease (NCD) community to engage across sectors to ensure NCDs and health continue to remain a global development priority.

The high-level week of the 71st UN General Assembly (UNGA71) will take place from 19 – 23 September 2016. Heads of State and Government will meet to participate in the General Debate, touching upon issues such as progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, antimicrobial resistance, and the refugee crisis. The UNGA enables the NCD and health community to highlight NCDs across the SDGs, and encourage a whole of government and sector approach to reducing the burden of NCDs.

HEADLINES

- **Progress is uneven**, despite three of the nine health targets under Sustainable Development Goal 3 being focused on NCD-related issues, and the WHO Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of NCDs. Achieving our shared goals of reducing premature mortality due to NCDs requires concerted action.
- **Governments must incorporate NCDs into national and regional development plans and frameworks**, working beyond the Ministry of Health, to ensure all dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social, environmental) that result in the social determinants of health and risk factors for NCDs are addressed (such as air pollution, nutrition, physical activity, tobacco control, etc.).
- **Getting to 2018 requires action beyond the health sector and delivering on financial commitments**, utilising a health in all policies approach and meeting commitments made in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and official development assistance targets.
- **Meaningful engagement of civil society is crucial** in helping governments adapt the global SDGs into national goals and targets, providing necessary technical expertise, capacity, and monitoring progress. Civil society can assist governments in making the investment case for NCDs and integrating NCDs into existing priority areas.
- **Addressing NCDs in fragile and conflict situations** will be essential for ensuring the health and wellbeing, particularly mental wellbeing, of the most marginalised populations. UNGA71 is an opportunity to make these links, given the high-level meeting on refugees and migrants.

HEALTH and the 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

This year, during three high-level meetings, the General Assembly will consider the threat of antimicrobial resistance, the refugee and migrant crisis, and entering into the implementation phase of the Paris Climate Agreement; these meetings will set the tone for the week.

Key Messages

- **Integrated implementation of NCDs requires action beyond SDG 3.** Due to the nature of the social determinants of and risk factors for NCDs, reaching the targets set forth in SDG 3 is unattainable unless action is taken to address risk factors. This requires action on other SDGs, such as SDG 2 on nutrition, SDG 4 on education, SDG 7 on clean energy, SDG 11 on sustainable cities, and SDG 13 on climate action, among many others. See the NCD Alliance [infographic](#) for more.
- **Innovative partnerships will be crucial to achieve goals**, including engagement with relevant private sector partners. These partnerships are particularly important given the context of the refugee and migrant crisis, which has implications for people living with NCDs. Mental health issues are expected to increase as a result of these crises.
- **Strong accountability and reporting on progress is paramount** to the achievement of the SDGs. Civil society can work with governments to ensure NCDs and health are well reflected in voluntary national reviews presented during the annual high-level political forum (HLPF).

- **Increased and continued momentum is necessary to meet NCD-related targets for 2018** in preparation for the third UN high-level meeting on NCDs.

TRANSITIONING FROM GLOBAL TO NATIONAL ACTION

One year after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, and after the first High-Level Political Forum, at which national progress towards achieving the SDGs was reviewed, it is important to keep the momentum and enthusiasm generated at the Sustainable Development Summit in 2015. Achieving the SDGs requires adoption of the SDGs by national governments into national and regional development plans.

Civil society plays a vital role in assisting governments to adapt the global goals to national requirements.

This includes ensuring all governments integrate NCDs into national development plans; using existing national NCDs plans as the basis for those countries with existing plans, and helping governments create plans where necessary.