



WHO European Ministerial Conference on the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases in the Context of Health 2020

Ashgabat, Turkmenistan
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Ashgabat Declaration on the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases in the Context of Health 2020

1. We, the ministers of health and representatives of the Member States of the World Health Organization in the European Region, together with the WHO Regional Director for Europe and health experts and representatives of civil society and intergovernmental organizations, have gathered in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, on 3 and 4 December 2013 to discuss ways to face the challenges posed by the heavy burden and threat of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs). Building on previous achievements and actions in our Region, we reaffirm our commitment to existing frameworks at all levels to address NCDs and related chronic conditions including those related to mental health and injuries.
2. We note the solid scientific evidence that the major NCDs cause suffering and undermine social and economic development in our countries. They are largely preventable diseases linked to a set of four common risk factors, namely tobacco use, harmful use of alcohol, unhealthy diets, and physical inactivity, and can remain preventable until late in life.
3. Health 2020, the new European regional health policy framework adopted in 2012, reflects a consensus on the importance of addressing social determinants of health and equity, promoting shared governance, adopting a life-course approach, strengthening health systems, improving and coordinating public health approaches, working with communities, and developing targets as a means to improving health for all.
4. In complementarity with the WHO Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases adopted in 2013, with work at the national level, and with initiatives within regional economic integration organizations, multiple joint efforts to prevent and control NCDs are under way.
5. We now commit to the following policy actions aligned to the objectives of Health 2020, in order to improve health for all, reduce health inequalities, and strengthen leadership and participatory governance for the prevention and control of NCDs.

Accelerating action to protect present and future generations from the devastating consequences of tobacco

6. We have reviewed progress in the ten years since the adoption of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. We conclude that the European Region faces growing differences in tobacco use between and within countries. While some countries have achieved historic lows in the prevalence of tobacco use, the Region as a whole has the highest prevalence of smoking globally.
 - We confirm our commitment to accelerate our efforts to achieve full implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control throughout the Region. We encourage countries that are not yet Parties to consider acceding to the Convention. We encourage as many countries as possible to ratify the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products across the Region.

- We share the ambition of working towards a tobacco-free European Region and will work together to make the global target on NCDs related to tobacco use a reality in all Member States of the European Region.

Acting across the whole of government

7. We have examined the deep connections between NCDs and sustainable economic and social development, with prosperity and social cohesion and the importance of effective collaboration across sectors for achieving results. We recognize the importance of regional action and cooperation in accelerating national action to respond to NCDs.

- For effective prevention and control of NCDs we will align our efforts towards cooperation across the whole government and, inter alia, to develop multisectoral action, health-in-all policies and whole-of-government approaches.
- We shall address our governance structures and institutional capacities to strengthen this action.
- We confirm our commitment to raise the priority accorded by global and national stakeholders to reduce the burden of NCDs as a means of enhancing human development in its social, economic and environmental dimensions across the whole of government and society as well as to ensure that due consideration is given to NCDs during the discussions on the post-2015 development agenda.

Accelerating national action

8. We have considered the capacity of European countries to respond to NCDs and to develop people-centred health systems supported by national health policies. Health promotion and prevention of NCDs are essential for the long-term sustainability of health systems and a productive population able to meet economic and social objectives.

- We will strengthen our national information systems to better monitor outcomes of NCDs, risk factors, the underlying determinants, and priority interventions guided by the Global Monitoring Framework and the Health 2020 indicators and welcome cooperation with the European Union and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the use of their monitoring frameworks in this effort, as appropriate.
- We recognize the added value of strong people-centred health systems adapted to NCDs and related chronic conditions. We will align our efforts to ensure a balanced and equitable investment to build national capacity in public health, health promotion, disease prevention, treatment, chronic care, and rehabilitation, and particularly so in the face of financial constraints.
- We will provide timely and appropriate population-based interventions and individual services to enable more effective planning and use of limited financial resources, reducing the burden of NCDs. NCDs can serve as a platform for investing in research and development for innovation in health as a means of generating knowledge and wealth and increasing the productivity of health systems.
- By 2016, in alignment with global and regional mandates, we will develop and adopt national targets and national action plans as appropriate to our respective national contexts.