

ECOSOC Management Segment

Introduction of the agenda item 12 (f) “Coordination, programme and other questions: prevention and control of non-communicable diseases”

21 July 2020, 10:00 am -1:00 pm

Excellencies, colleagues ...

Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) cause 71% of all deaths globally. 85% of these "premature" deaths, under the age of 69, occur in low- and middle-income countries. Notably, suicide is the second leading cause of death in the 15–29 age group and for girls aged between 15 and 19 years (for boys, it is the third leading cause of death).

Prevention and treatment services for noncommunicable diseases have been severely disrupted since the COVID-19 pandemic began. This situation is of significant concern because people suffering from COVID-19 endure worse outcomes when they have serious underlying medical conditions, including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer and chronic respiratory disease. Tobacco smokers also appear to have worse outcomes, and we know tobacco is the only risk factor which seriously impact all NCDs, including mental health.

In 2018 and 2019 ECOSOC called upon the Task Force to provide support to Member States in scaling up access to affordable, accessible and quality medicines and diagnostics for NCDs.

In response, members of the Task Force started working on implementation of this action point by developing a Tobacco Cessation Facility. On 10 July Access Initiative for Quitting Tobacco was launched, including the AI cessation bot “Florence” and donations of nicotine replacement therapies were made to different countries. The Tobacco Facility serves as the first step to an expanded drug facility addressing other diseases and conditions.

Over the past year, agencies in the Joint United Nations Programme on Cervical Cancer Prevention and Control, formed by seven members of the Task Force, have engaged at the global and regional levels in developing the WHO global strategy on the elimination of cervical cancer as a public health problem.

The Task Force has also supported countries in providing evidence-based digital health programmes. A key example is the Be He@lthy, Be Mobile initiative of WHO and the International Telecommunication Union. Be He@lthy, Be Mobile programmes show a 19 per cent quit rate among a sample of mobile tobacco cessation users, improved glycaemic control among mobile diabetes users and an increase in cervical cancer screenings among mobile cervical cancer users. The mobile diabetes programme has reached over 800,000 individuals, while the mobile tobacco cessation programme has reached over 2.1 million users, across five countries

Task Force members continue to support the WHO SAFER initiative to reduce the harmful use of alcohol. A SAFER technical package focusing on multisectoral approaches across five key alcohol policy interventions, based on their impact on population health and their cost-effectiveness, was launched in 2019.

The thematic group on tobacco control, chaired by the secretariat of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and its members focused its work on providing technical support to: (a) improve governance at the national level and protect tobacco control policies from industry interference; (b)

strengthen tobacco taxation; and (d) integrate tobacco control into broader sustainable development efforts and national health and development agendas.

The UN Secretary General's report emphasized the following **recommendations**:

- The need to increase levels of investment for the Task Force to reach its full potential in providing timely and effective specialized technical assistance to Member States in line with their requests,
- And the establishment of a multi-partner trust fund on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases and mental health, which we hope donors and partners will soon be contributing to.

In closing let me thank the Russian Federation for their strong support and for their leadership in facilitating the resolution before you, and also convey my appreciation to all delegations who constructively engaged in the process.

Thank you.