As a direct response to United Nations Political Declaration on NCDs\(^1\), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the World Health Organization (WHO) have jointly launched a new global program on the use of mobile and other technologies to improve the treatment and prevention of NCDs. This Ministerial Breakfast event will discuss how these recent technological innovations are changing the healthcare and health-management context for NCDs and providing the global community with new opportunities for prevention and control.

**The leading cause of death worldwide:** Non Communicable Diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases, cancer, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes, are the leading cause of mortality in the world, representing 63% of all deaths. Out of the 36 million people who died from NCDs in 2008, nine million were under 60. The largest burden—80% or 28 million—occurs in low and middle income countries, making NCDs a major cause of poverty and an urgent development issue. NCDs will be the leading global cause of disability by 2030\(^2\).

**Investing in NCDs:** The costs of inaction far outweigh those of taking action. A new WHO action plan highlights interventions for prevention and control of NCDs which give a good return on investment, generating one year of healthy life for a cost that falls below the gross domestic product (GDP) per person and are affordable for all countries\(^3\). Inaction will result in loss of productivity and an escalation of health care costs in all countries. The World Economic Forum and the Harvard School of Public Health estimated a cumulative output loss due to the NCDs together with mental disorders is estimated to be US$ 47 trillion. This loss represents 75% of global GDP in 2010, amounting to US$ 63 trillion\(^4\).

**The value of prevention:** Half of the deaths caused by NCDs are preventable. Prevention can be achieved through increased health literacy, awareness and behavioral changes aimed at reducing common risk factors. As the increased NCD prevalence poses a mounting challenge to healthcare systems worldwide and to public and private finances, prevention represents a cost-effective solution for alleviating the economic burden of such diseases. Reducing mortality and morbidity through increased investment in prevention programs will contribute to higher economic growth and allow limited resources to be focused efficiently on patients most in need.

**A shared commitment:** Combating NCDs should be a shared commitment: it requires effective, multi-sectoral and inter-sectoral strategies at the global, regional and national levels that are fully integrated into healthcare systems and extend

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\(^1\) Resolution A/RES/66/2


beyond the traditional health sector. Governments must help to prevent and manage these diseases effectively. Strengthening health care systems is a central task. Other stakeholders, such as health professionals and civil society, can also play a major role in increasing awareness and education, improving early detection and disease surveillance, and facilitating implementation of prevention programs. The research-based pharmaceutical industry plays a key role in discovering new medicines for both prevention and treatment of NCDs.

The role of mHealth: Technological innovations are changing the landscape of disease prevention and control. The widespread availability of mobile technology, including in many of the least developed countries, is an exceptional opportunity to expand the use of mHealth. Mobile phones are already been used to help people quit smoking, to better support diabetic patient through their treatment, to help health workers conduct households surveys to measure NCD prevention levels, to inform young people about sporting and fitness opportunities and to help people maintain healthy food diaries.

"Be Healthy, Be Mobile": The joint new global program launched by WHO and ITU on the use of mobile and other technologies to improve the treatment and prevention of NCDs “Be Health, Be Mobile”, will be building on current projects to provide evidence-based and operational guidance to encourage partners worldwide, especially governments, to implement mHealth interventions to address prevention and treatment of NCDs and their common risk factors – tobacco use, unhealthy diet, physical inactivity and the harmful use of alcohol.

The Ministerial Roundtable Breakfast: Capitalizing on the ECOSOC taking place in July in Geneva, ITU and the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations (IFPMA) will convene an interactive high-level Roundtable featuring Member States, IGO officials, and other stakeholders. This Roundtable, held as a Ministerial Breakfast event, will discuss how these recent technological innovations are changing the healthcare and health-management context for NCDs and providing the global community with new opportunities for prevention and control. It will also bring visibility to the "Be Healthy, Be Mobile" initiative, and make stakeholders converge, exchange views, and galvanize further action.

The Ministerial Roundtable Breakfast will coincide with the launch of the IFPMA’s publication "Health in Your Pockets", a collection of mHealth initiatives undertaken by the research-based pharmaceutical industry, and showcase the "Be Healthy, Be Mobile" as a tangible example of inter-sectoral action aligned with the UN Political Declaration on NCDs.

Leading questions:

1. What are the opportunities to leverage mobile technologies for NCDs prevention, treatment and policy enforcement and what could be the potential benefits for the health sector, governments, private sector, Civil Society, and the end user?

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2. What are the key challenges preventing health community to embrace the mobile phone’s potential as a tool for improving population health and how to overcome those?

3. What are some of the potential innovative partnership models that can be applied to accelerate mHealth development?
About us:

ITU
ITU is the leading United Nations agency for information and communication technology. For nearly 150 years, ITU has coordinated the shared global use of the radio spectrum, promoted international cooperation in assigning satellite orbits, worked to improve communication infrastructure in the developing world, and established the worldwide standards that foster seamless interconnection of a vast range of communications systems. From broadband networks to new-generation wireless technologies, aeronautical and maritime navigation, radio astronomy, satellite-based meteorology and converging fixed-mobile phone, Internet and broadcasting technologies, ITU is committed to connecting the world.

IFPMA
IFPMA represents the research-based pharmaceutical companies and associations across the globe. The research-based pharmaceutical industry’s 1.3 million employees research, develop and provide medicines and vaccines that improve the life of patients worldwide. Based in Geneva, IFPMA has official relations with the United Nations and contributes industry expertise to help the global health community find solutions that improve global health.