



**ECOSOC/UNESCWA/WHO Western Asia Ministerial Meeting
“Addressing noncommunicable diseases and injuries:
Major challenges to sustainable development in the 21st century”**

Hosted in Doha by the Government of Qatar, 10-11 May 2009

The following key messages, recommendations and Declaration were endorsed at the Western Asian Ministerial Meeting on Noncommunicable Diseases and Injuries held in Doha, Qatar, 10-11 May 2009 for appropriate consideration by the Economic and Social Council during the 2009 Annual Ministerial Review (Geneva, 6-8 July 2009).

KEY MESSAGES

- Addressing noncommunicable diseases (cardiovascular diseases, cancers, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases) and injuries (caused by traffic crashes, burns, falls, drowning or violence) is central to global, regional and national socio-economic development efforts and national and human security.
- These noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) and injuries, and their risk factors and determinants, are closely related to poverty and mutually reinforce each other. Instruments such as the Millennium Development Goals and their indicators, if adequately expanded to reflect accurately the current burden of NCDs and injuries, would provide opportunities for synergy between health promotion and development efforts.
- The socio-economic cost of NCDs and injuries is enormous and is rising rapidly. These conditions cause considerable disability and premature death leading to lost productivity. The rapidly increasing health costs are impoverishing, and inaction is a tremendous burden to sustainable development.
- National policies in sectors other than health have a major bearing on the risk factors and determinants for NCDs and injuries. Health gains can be achieved much more readily by integrating health into national strategies, as well as policies in sectors such as transport, trade, taxation, education, social planning and development, agriculture, urban planning, mass media, food and pharmaceutical production than through health policies alone. Such integrated approaches can be mutually beneficial to all sectors involved.
- Public policy makers need to ensure that the responses to NCDs are placed at the forefront of efforts to strengthen health systems. Prevention and control of



NCDs and injuries can be achieved through low-cost, cost-effective approaches and should be mainstreamed into primary health care.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Member States to develop national and regional multi-sectoral action plans guided by existing frameworks, including the Action Plan for the Global Strategy for Prevention and Control of NCDs, endorsed by the World Health Assembly in 2008, and regional and global resolutions.
- The General Assembly may consider integrating evidence-based indicators on NCDs and injuries into the core MDG monitoring and evaluation system during the 2010 review of the MDGs.
- Government departments in charge of planning and development should integrate the monitoring of NCDs and injuries as part of their national processes for monitoring the MDGs and other development goals.
- ECOSOC to consider the issues of NCD prevention and injury prevention in its 2010 annual session during the coordination segment.
- The United Nations system, led by WHO should develop and disseminate tools that enable decision makers to assess the impact of policies on the determinants of, risk factors for, and consequences of NCDs and injuries and provide models of effective, evidence-based policy making.
- Strengthen standardized data collection on NCDs, risk factors and injuries, and establish baselines, with special emphasis on strengthening data on the socio-economic impact, health and equity.
- Raise the priority accorded to NCDs and injury prevention on the agendas of relevant high level forums and meetings of national, regional, and international leaders.
- Facilitate dialogue between national partners: Ministries of Finance, Health and other sectors to identify sustainable and innovative sources of financing for NCD and injury programmes and other pro-poor social policies.
- A Regional Ministerial Multisectoral Task Force should be established to provide strategic and technical input and conduct external reviews of the progress made



by the region with regards to NCDs and injuries and its partners, and the impact of initiatives on the prevention and control of NCDs and injuries.

- Member countries should consider adopting the required legal instruments to protect media recipients from any health threatening material and strengthen the involvement of media outlets in promoting NCD and injury prevention policies and building health literacy across societies.

DOHA DECLARATION ON NONCOMMUNICABLE DISEASES AND INJURIES

We, the participants at the ECOSOC/UNESCWA/WHO Western Asia Ministerial Meeting “Addressing noncommunicable diseases and injuries: major challenges to sustainable development in the 21st century” hosted in Doha by the Government of Qatar between 10-11 May 2009 and representing a diverse group of representatives from Member States and other stakeholders;

Acknowledging that the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental human rights as well as an integral part of sustainable development;

Aware that we are building on existing commitments made by global and national leaders;

Recognizing the need for immediate action to reduce the potentially devastating health and socio-economic impact of the accelerating burden of major noncommunicable diseases (cardiovascular diseases, cancers, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases) as well as of injuries on low- and middle-income countries and on Arab countries in particular;

Mindful of the need to ensure social protection and protect health budgets in the context of the current international financial crisis;

Having considered the Concept Notes and Discussion Papers on the challenge of noncommunicable diseases and injuries and their impact on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, poverty reduction strategies and other strategic socio-economic programme frameworks;

Recalling World Health Assembly resolution WHA61.14 adopted in 2008, endorsing the 2008-2013 action plan for the global strategy for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases; United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/RES/62/244 adopted in 2008 on improving global road safety; A/RES/61/225 adopted



in 2007 on diabetes; WHA60.22 adopted in 2007 on emergency-care health systems; WHA59.21, adopted in 2006, on infant and young child nutrition; WHA58.23, adopted in 2005, on disability, including prevention, management and rehabilitation; ECOSOC resolution E/2004/55, adopted in 2004, on tobacco control; WHA57.10, adopted in May 2004, on road safety and health; WHA57.17, adopted in 2004, endorsing the WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health; WHA56.1, adopted in May 2003, endorsing the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control; WHA56.24 adopted in May 2003, endorsing the recommendations of the World report on violence and health; and WHA53.17 adopted in 2000, endorsing the global strategy for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases;

Reaffirming the leadership role of WHO in promoting global action against noncommunicable diseases and injuries,

We urge Member States in the region to:

- Develop national and regional multi-sectoral action plans to address NCDs and injuries guided by recommendations contained in existing resolutions.
- Integrate the monitoring of NCDs and injuries as part of their national processes for monitoring the MDGs, poverty reduction strategies and other strategic socio-economic programme frameworks;.
- Facilitate intersectoral dialogue between national partners: Ministries of Finance, Health and other sectors to develop national multisectoral frameworks and identify sustainable and innovative sources of financing for NCD and injury policies and plans and other pro-poor social policies.
- Enable health systems to respond more effectively and equitably to the health-care needs of poor people with NCDs and injuries in low- and middle-income countries.
- Implement effective legislative measures to ban advertising, promotion and sponsorship of products which may increase the risk for disease.
- Promote and strengthen public awareness of NCD and injury issues and building health literacy across societies, using all available communication tools, as appropriate, in particular the media.



We call:

- For integration of evidence-based indicators on NCDs and injuries into the core MDG monitoring and evaluation system during the 2010 review of the MDGs.
- On ECOSOC to consider the issue of NCD prevention and injury prevention in its 2010 coordination segment.
- For the development and dissemination of tools that enable decision makers to assess the impact of policies on the determinants of, risk factors for, and consequences of NCDs and injuries and provide models of effective, evidence-based policy making.
- For strengthening the standardized data collection on NCDs, risk factors and injuries, and establish baselines, with special emphasis on strengthening data on the socio-economic impact, health, and equity.
- For raising the priority accorded to NCDs and injury prevention on the agendas of relevant high level forums and meetings of national, regional, and international leaders.
- For a review of international experience in the prevention and control of NCDs and injuries in low- and middle-income countries, including community-based programmes, and identify and disseminate successful approaches for intersectoral action.
- For the establishment of a Regional Ministerial Multisectoral Task Force to provide strategic and technical input and conduct external reviews of the progress made by the region with regards to NCDs and injuries and its partners, and the impact of initiatives on the prevention and control of NCDs and injuries.