

MDGs, SDGs, NCDs...

Explaining the state of play, October 2012

The space in which NCDs are being tackled can currently seem crowded and confusing, following the UN High-level Meeting on NCDs (September 2011) and the Rio+20 Summit (June 2012), and with the Millennium Development Goals due to come to an end in just a couple of years (2015).

This short document from C3 Collaborating for Health is a recap on the state of play as of late October 2012. It summarises the processes in three key areas: global action on NCDs; the post-2015 development agenda; and the proposed sustainable development goals. It includes many weblinks, many of which will be updated as the three strands take shape.

In particular, please note the calls to action from the NCD Alliance (of which C3 is a member) to encourage your government to address NCDs in a global framework and as a development priority, and to take part in the forthcoming NCD Alliance e-consultation (from November).

1. Global action on NCDs

There are several important actions being taken following the UN HLM:

1.1 Developing a global monitoring framework (GMF) for NCDs:

The Political Declaration adopted at the UNHLM (more [here](#)) called for the development of a global NCD monitoring framework and targets (paragraphs 61 and 62). In July 2012, the WHO produced a discussion paper on the GMF, its third on the topic ([here](#)), on which the NCD Alliance ([here](#)) and others have commented.

There is currently discussion on 10 possible targets, under the already agreed goal set by the World Health Assembly in May 2012 to reduce premature mortality from NCDs by 25 per cent by 2025 ('25 by 25'). These possible targets include: reducing blood pressure, reducing salt intake and tobacco use, availability of generic medicines and technologies etc.

The NCD Alliance submission reiterated the need to agree to a comprehensive set of targets and indicators, and makes five key recommendations:

- 1) establish and resource a robust global monitoring framework;
- 2) adopt a comprehensive set of bold targets to drive progress towards '25 by 25';
- 3) strike a balance between targets on prevention, treatment and care;
- 4) agree a rigorous reporting system, including national reporting every two years [although there has been 'pushback' against this idea, which is seen as too frequent, with five years being called for within the UN], to the World Health Assembly and the UN General Assembly;
- 5) apply the global targets to regional and national levels.

There have been a series of regional meetings of WHO to discuss these issues, and different regions have different priorities. For example, WHO EURO was keen to stress the need to tackle health inequality; WPRO focused on the four major risk factor targets and transfat elimination; PAHO has already adopted a regional strategy on NCDs, with comprehensive regional targets. The AFRO region meeting is to be held at the end of November, but there has been a regional workshop already, which supported the need to develop health systems and essential medicines.

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There is a great deal of work still to do, so there is an additional formal meeting of the WHO to be held on 5–7 November 2012 on targets and the monitoring framework. This will be a closed meeting (i.e. country delegations only).

1.2 Developing the Global Action Plan for NCDs 2013–2020

On 10 October 2012, the ‘Zero Draft Action Plan’ was released ([here](#)). The revised ‘first draft’ will be submitted to the WHO Executive Board in January, and there will be an informal online consultation next year.

This Plan will supersede the current WHO Global Action Plan 2008-2012 ([here](#)). The WHO produced a discussion paper in July 2012 ([here](#)), and the NCD Alliance’s briefing paper in response can be found [here](#). The NCD Alliance recommendations around the Global Action Plan include the need to reinforce political commitment to NCDs as a development priority, improve international cooperation, promote multisector working, and reduce the risk factors.

Among the work done by WHO prior to and since the UN HLM that will be feeding into the process of developing the Plan includes the identification of some of the ‘best buys’ in NCDs ([here](#)).

1.3 Global NCD coordinating mechanism

Working in partnership across sectors is recognised by the Political Declaration as essential for making progress on NCDs, and a coordinating mechanism is being discussed. At the end of August 2012, Margaret Chan sent a paper to the UN setting out partnership options, and the UN General Assembly will discuss this in November. There is more on this on the NCD Alliance website [here](#).

2. Millennium Development Goal successors

The MDGs are due to come to an end in 2015 and, ahead of this, the post-2015 development agenda is being developed – fast. The official global platform for the process is [here](#) and the WHO’s web portal is [here](#).

2.1 UN Task Team and High Level Panel

The new **UN System Task Team** on the Post-2015 UN Development Agenda (made up of representatives of over 50 UN organisations and other international bodies) has developed a schematic for the development framework (see Annex, below), published in its report, *Realising the Future We Want for All: Report to the Secretary-General* ([here](#)). (The NCD Alliance has produced a thinkpiece ([here](#)) on how NCDs fit into the ‘inclusive social development’ section of the schematic.)

- A series of 18 thematic thinkpieces were published by the Task Team in summer 2012, including one on health ([here](#)), which has put forward the idea of a single overarching health goal – namely, universal health coverage (which would include primary prevention, screening, treatment etc.).

A **UN High-level Panel** of Eminent Persons has been established, made up of three co-chairs (President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia and Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom) and 26 members. They first met on 25 September during the UN General Assembly, and will have meetings in London (November), then two more meetings ahead of May, when it is due to release its report.

2.2 National and thematic consultations

There will be over 100 **national consultations** in the course of the next year, coordinated by UNDP on behalf of the UN Development Group, held with the goal of producing clear recommendations for governments on the next steps for the international development agenda. It is not yet evident how the national consultations will be published or how they will be announced, and national advocacy will be needed to keep non-communicable diseases as a priority. The NCD Alliance asks that they be informed if you know of the timings of national consultations, so that the Alliance can ensure they are publicised within as many countries as possible.

There are also to be a series of **thematic consultations**, including one on ‘health’, which will be led by WHO and UNICEF. To feed into the consultation on health:

- WHO published a concept note on health and the MDGs post-2015 ([here](#)). The WHO has issued a call for papers on health and development post-2015 (deadline 15 December: [here](#));
- Beyond 2015 is developing a civil society position paper on health, led by Medicus Mundi (deadline to submit considerations for inclusion is 5 November) (more information [here](#));
- WHO released a short – four-page – discussion paper in October 2012 on the post-2015 framework ([here](#)), which includes discussion of the idea for an overarching goal on universal health coverage. (Note that this is not yet the official position, but there is plenty of discussion around it.)

3. Sustainable development

Following the Rio+20 meeting in June 2012 (more information [here](#)), and running simultaneously with, but separate from, 1) and 2), there are now moves under way to develop a set of Sustainable Development Goals, probably based on the outline for Rio+20 (i.e. jobs, energy, cities, food, water, oceans and disasters).

This process will begin with the appointment of a 30-member working group, and the Goals will be developed simultaneously with and separately from the post-2015 work – the two strands are likely to be formally merged only in late 2013 or early 2014. The process will include a series of country consultations – once again, separate from the MDG/post-2015 consultations.

4. Combining the SDGs and MDGs

The processes are likely to be formally merged at the end of 2013 or 2014 (Brazil is pushing to keep the MDGs and SDGs separate – but most want them merged) – but civil society should not approach them separately. The UN has prioritised civil society having access to the processes, and should take on board the views of all actors. There is, as yet, no mechanism for the United Nations to synthesise the input into the two processes.

5. Action

The NCD Alliance is encouraging its members and other stakeholders, to advocate three main actions:

- Action 1: encourage governments to embrace the idea of a Global NCD framework, combining all these processes – this would maintain pressure at the highest level of government, keeping NCDs at the top of the global health agenda, and feeding into the global development landscape (more [here](#));
- Action 2: Engage with governments on the targets and monitoring framework (more [here](#));
- Action 3: encourage governments to engage with the Global Action Plan (more [here](#)).

In addition, the NCD Alliance is holding an **e-consultation**, using SurveyMonkey, in three languages. Its aim is to stimulate discussion in its network and more widely on how health and NCDs relate to the MDGs and future development goals, and other critical issues (e.g. universal health coverage etc.). This will launch on 1 November, and will develop a common position on asks and must-haves to submit to WHO for 15 December.

6. And finally....

Just to complicate matters further, there are two further ongoing processes of particular relevance to tackling NCDs globally:

- **WHO reform:** WHO is currently undergoing a reform process that will shape WHO’s programmes, priorities and resources from 2014–19. A stakeholder consultation has concluded; the NCD Alliance made a submission to this consultation ([here](#)); and
- **WHO Global Mental Health Action Plan:** a ‘zero draft’ of a 2013–20 Global Mental Health Action Plan has been developed ([here](#)) and the NCD Alliance’s submission on the draft plan is [here](#).

Annex: Schematic of the post-2015 priorities

This schematic is taken from the UN System Task Team’s report, *Realising the Future We Want for All: Report to the Secretary-General* ([here](#)).

