



## WHO, Ghana and Norway agree to accelerate actions to save lives in first International Strategic Dialogue on Noncommunicable Diseases and the Sustainable Development Goals

**12 April 2022** - WHO welcomes the establishment of a new Heads of State and Government Group to accelerate progress towards the SDG target for noncommunicable diseases - a one-third reduction in “premature” deaths from diseases like diabetes, cancer, heart and lung disease and the promotion of mental health and well-being.

The decision was taken at the inaugural International Strategic Dialogue on Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs) and the Sustainable Development Goals, held today in Accra, Ghana, where a new Global Compact on NCDs was launched. The dialogue was co-hosted by WHO, together with the Governments of Ghana and Norway.

Heads of State highlighted the urgency of the NCD pandemic, which kills 7 out of 10 people globally from risk factors like tobacco, alcohol, unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, and air pollution.

NCDs are largely preventable and treatable, nearly 7 million lives could be saved for just US\$ 0.84 per person per year from now until 2030. This investment would realize more than US\$ 230 billion in economic and societal benefits and avert nearly 10 million heart attacks and strokes globally by 2030.

The Heads of States and Governments Group announced that it will gather countries championing the NCD agenda and will convene annually at the UN General Assembly. The first meeting is expected to take place in September 2022.

The NCD Compact will focus on 5 key areas of commitment:

- saving, by 2030, the lives of 50 million people from dying prematurely of NCDs by implementing the most cost-effective measures to prevent and control NCDs;
- protecting 1.7 billion people living with NCDs by ensuring that they have access to the medicines and care they need during humanitarian emergencies;
- integrating NCDs within primary health care and universal health coverage;
- comprehensive NCD surveillance and monitoring; and
- meaningfully engaging 1.7 billion people living with NCDs and mental health conditions in policy-making and programming.

The economic, as well as the health, benefits of investing in NCDs was a clear theme at the Dialogue. Norway has been a frontrunner in investment in the fight against NCDs, investing internationally, becoming the first donor country to include NCDs in its international development strategy.

Mr. Nana Addo Dankwa Afuko-Addo, President of Ghana, outlined the successes of Ghana in implementing tobacco demand-reduction measures and introducing guidelines for NCD management, but also highlighted the challenges for lower-income countries in accelerating action.

**Statements from the meeting:**

Mr. Nana Addo Dankwa Afuko-Addo, President of Ghana:

“Tackling the phenomenon of NCDs requires leadership to provide visibility to NCD issues. I ask my Heads of State colleagues to join hands with me as we establish a Presidential Group (non-binding), and as we find solutions to NCDs with a roadmap of universal health coverage and the Sustainable Development Goals. In our time, this will be our legacy”.

Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization:

“Apart from the lives they take, NCDs take a heavy toll on economies, cutting down people in their most productive years. Overcoming this challenge requires technical, financial, and above all, political commitment. I thank the Governments of Norway and Ghana for establishing the first Global Heads of State and Government Group on NCDs, and launching the Global NCD Compact 2020-2030.”

Mr Jonas Gahr Støre, Prime Minister of Norway:

“Investing in stronger health systems, service delivery and the prevention of NCDs will make vulnerable populations more resilient to COVID-19 and future pandemics. This is also vital for promoting universal health coverage. NCD prevention, and access to treatment and medicine must be a core component in the efforts to enhance pandemic preparedness and response, and in building back better in the post-pandemic recovery.”

Dr Matshidiso Moeti, WHO Regional Director for Africa:

“Noncommunicable diseases account for nearly a third of deaths in Africa, where they not only pose a grave threat to health and well-being, but also blunt socioeconomic development. The commitment reached today marks a crucial step in speeding up the progress against these diseases and their risk factors as well as the suffering and deaths they cause.”

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