

NCD Alliance analysis of the draft Political Declaration, 12 August 2011

The NCD Alliance has prepared the following analysis of the latest draft Political Declaration (PD) for High-level Meeting (HLM) on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases.

Highlights:

The following elements appear to be reasonably well-represented in the current draft:

1. The global nature of the burden of NCDs: language in the preambular portion of the draft PD clearly articulates NCDs as a global issue and a major threat to social and economic development around the world and the achievement of internationally agreed development goals
2. Recognition of the urgent need for greater measures at all levels to prevent and control NCDs, and to contribute to realizing the right of everyone to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health
3. Recognition of the four major modifiable risk factors – tobacco use, unhealthy diets, harmful use of alcohol, and physical inactivity – the role they play in contributing to the growing burden of disease, and the need to reduce exposure to these risk factors
4. Recognition of the increasing mortality rates of the four major NCDs, and that other NCDs include mental and neurological disorders, renal, oral and eye diseases
5. Attention to the linkages between NCDs and the cycle of poverty, lack of education, social, economic, political, and environmental determinants
6. Affirmation of the connection between maternal and child health, communicable diseases, education, and other development issues
7. Recognition of the particular burden on the poor, women, children, adolescents, indigenous people, care-givers, people with HIV; and the need for a life-course approach and use of ‘preventable’ rather than ‘premature’ deaths
8. An emphasis on the need for prevention as the cornerstone of the global response to NCDs
9. The need for multisectoral action to combat and prevent NCDs at all levels
10. The need to strengthen national capacities to address NCDs: call for national responses to the NCD crisis to be sustainable, cost-effective and comprehensive

Lowlights:

The following elements have been introduced in the draft PD, but have either been removed over the course of the negotiations or significantly weakened:

1. Resistance to the use of the word “epidemic”

- WHO, the Secretary-General's report, the Jakarta Declaration, the Mexico Declaration, the EU Oslo report consistently use the term "epidemic" to convey the magnitude of the challenge. This is being contested by numerous donor countries – who should not downplay the seriousness of the NCD burden in order to protect trade and intellectual property interests
2. Language on meaningful access to quality-assured medicines and technologies is highly contested
 3. Allocation of resources
 - The draft language on resources is very weak. There is resistance from some donor countries to recognize the current lack of adequate *global* resources for NCDs and resistance to go beyond domestic resource provisioning
 - Language calls on Member States to "promote all possible means to identify and mobilize" resources and "consider" supporting "voluntary" approaches for long-term financing mechanisms, taking into consideration commitments already made to the achievement of the MDGs
 4. Absence of concrete targets and dates on the prevention and control of NCDs
 - No recognition or inclusion of either short-term or long-term time-bound targets, easily achievable through cost-effective interventions
 - Specific target of reducing population salt intake to less than 5g per person per day has been considered but then deleted
 5. No call for costed national NCD plans
 - Current language suggests the establishment and strengthening of national NCD plans and policies by 2013 only "as appropriate."
 6. Zero mention of a commitment to protect children from marketing of alcohol or other specific measures to reduce harmful use of alcohol
 7. Language on national tobacco tax strategies: current proposed language calls for using fiscal policies to prevent NCDs, but language on the need for national tobacco taxation strategies to reduce consumption and generate revenue has been deleted
 8. Weak language and little support for a high-level coordinating mechanism for action on NCDs
 - Current text calls for Member States to submit proposals for "strengthening multisectoral action" to the Secretary-General for him to present back to Member States for "consideration" by the end of 2012
 9. A high-level comprehensive review in 2014
 - Current language calls for a comprehensive review in 2014 (which NCDA understands could be a High-Level Meeting), though there is strong pressure to issue a report instead or delay the review entirely until after 2015