

**Statement to the 68<sup>th</sup> session  
of the WHO Regional Committee Meeting for the Western Pacific  
Agenda item 16.2: Noncommunicable diseases**

This statement is delivered by World Cancer Research Fund International, supported by NCD Alliance and NCDs-VN. We commend the progress made in NCD prevention and control within the WPRO Region, but note with concern the growing burden of NCDs, with 11.4 million NCD deaths in 2015<sup>i</sup>, constituting 85% of all deaths in the region. With the UN High Level Review on NCDs in 2018, we call on governments to accelerate progress on cancer and NCD prevention and control through action in five key areas:

- 1. Accelerate implementation of the four national, time-bound targets adopted at the 2014 UN High Level Review:** The 2017 WHO NCD Progress Monitor lists data for 28 of the 37 countries and areas in the Region. Of these, only 12 have national multisectoral action plans, while only 13 have set targets for 2025 based on WHO guidance. Implementation of WHO's Best Buys for NCDs is lagging behind even further.
- 2. Ensure adequate and sustained financial resources for NCDs:** Significant domestic resource mobilisation is necessary to address cancer and other NCDs and achieve UHC. As recognised in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, taxes on unhealthy commodities that are NCD risk factors (such as tobacco, alcohol, and foods and beverages high in sugar, salt and fat) provide a win-win solution by increasing domestic revenue, which can be reinvested in health promotion and systems, and decreasing consumption.
- 3. Develop a regional action plan to protect children from the harmful impact of food marketing:** We urge the Regional Committee to welcome the report on *protecting children from the harmful impact of food marketing* and move forward on adopting a resolution to develop a regional action plan to restrict marketing to children of food high in saturated fats, trans-fatty acids, free sugars and salt, as well breastmilk substitutes. Studies show that marketing to children is strongly linked with changes in dietary consumption, overweight, obesity and diet-related NCDs.
- 4. Leverage the preparatory process for the 2018 UN HLM on NCDs:** The 2018 High-level Meeting on NCDs offers a pivotal opportunity to reinforce political commitment for NCD prevention and control, to exchange good practices and make new commitments to address bottlenecks in national NCD responses. We call on Member States to ensure representation at the level of Heads of Government and Heads of State, as well as across sectors with a role in NCD prevention (including agriculture, transport, education, trade and urban planning) - while guarding against interference from the tobacco, alcohol, and food and beverage industries. Attendance at the highest political level is essential to accelerating policy coherence and initiate systems change to mitigate the current and future burden of NCDs on individuals, health systems and economies.
- 5. Address NCDs within the new WHO Global Programme of Work to ensure progress on NCDs beyond the 2018 Meeting:** As the cause of the greatest global disease burden, NCDs require adequate focus and better elaboration of action and resources in the new Global Programme of Work.

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<sup>i</sup> [http://www.who.int/healthinfo/global\\_burden\\_disease/estimates/en/index1.html](http://www.who.int/healthinfo/global_burden_disease/estimates/en/index1.html)