NCD advocates meet in New York to call on governments to advance care and UHC

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Noncommunicable disease (NCD) advocates from around the world joined forces in New York from 11 to 13 July to strategise on how to persuade heads of state and government to take leadership at the upcoming UN High-level Meeting (HLM) on Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

Brought together by the NCDA Alliance (NCDA) Advocacy Institute, members of NCD alliances from Cameroon (representing Africa NCDs Network), Mexico, Rwanda, Ghana, Kenya, Vietnam, Malaysia and India gathered to coordinate strategies that aim to accelerate action on the prevention and care of NCDs and on embedding UHC. They also stressed the need for meaningful engagement of people living with NCDs to ensure that UHC remains people-centred.

Held on the margins of the High-Level Political Forum of SDGs, the two- and half-day civil society workshop titled *Building momentum to advance NCD care and UHC towards the UN High-Level Meeting on UHC*, also presented a unique opportunity for the alliances to meet with their UN country missions.

In these meetings, advocates had the chance to share information of national NCD landscape, advocacy priorities as well as concrete asks for their government's engagement at HLM – something that is of particular importance as per the ongoing negotiations for the Political Declaration to be adopted. The advocates also encouraged the participation of the high-level government representatives at the HLM.

The workshop engaged an external faculty of speakers from organisations including Civil Society Engagement Mechanism for UHC2030, United Nations Development Programme, Movendi International and United for Global Mental Health. It fostered knowledge exchanges, experience-sharing between advocates regarding national contexts, entry points for advocacy and coalition building efforts, and strategic coordination for effective collective advocacy – linking the national, regional and global levels of advocacy ahead of the HLM on UHC and beyond.

Leading up to the HLM in September, NCDA will be running a series of events and activities that will culminate in the Global Week for Action on NCDs campaign, 14-21 September. This year's theme is **Bridging the care gap**. The Global Week aims to deliver one clear message to government, donors, international agencies and the private sector: The moment for caring is now!

For more information on the Advocacy Institute, please visit here [1].

This workshop was organised thanks to NCDA's partnership with Access Accelerated and The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust.

Rose Gahire (Rwanda NCDA) watches speaker Ha Thu Tran (NCDs-Vietnam). PHOTO: © Kristina Sumfleth/NCD Alliance
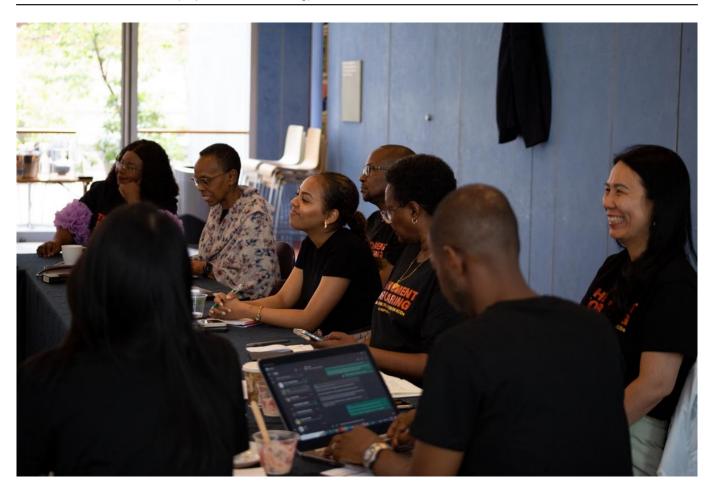
PHOTO: © Kristina Sumfleth/NCD Alliance

Labram Musah of Ghana NCD Alliance making a point. PHOTO: © Kristina Sumfleth/NCD Alliance

Catherine Karekezi and David Makumi, of NCD Alliance Kenya, with Juan Nuñez (Mexico Salud Hable

Coalition).PHOTO: © NCD Alliance

While in New York representatives of the Ghana NCD Alliance (Labram Musa, left, and Dr. Wiafe-Addai, right) met with the Hon. Harold Agyeman, Ghana's Ambassador to the United Nations, to discuss NCD priorities within the UHC context. PHOTO: © Ghana NCD Alliance

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