
NCDs high on the agendas of all WHO Regional Committee Meetings



WHO

The World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Committee Meetings (RCMs) convene once a year in each of the six WHO regions. These are WHO's highest decision-making bodies, where ministers of health and high-level dignitaries meet to shape political commitment and action to improve the health and health systems of the people living in each region. The NCD Alliance and its partners had a presence at all six of the meetings. Here are some of the highlights from each one.

The Western Pacific RCM was attended by representatives of the Healthy Philippines Alliance. WHO Director General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus was present in Manila to give his opening statement and facilitate several sessions. The focus of the RCM was on primary health care, climate and health, pandemic preparedness, and NCDs. Several member countries highlighted their progress on integrating NCDs into primary health care. Dr Tedros also emphasized that more funding will be allocated towards country offices in order to better support member states.

The RCM of the Americas was chaired by Panama, with representatives from Latin America, North America and Caribbean countries. The agenda was comprehensive with numerous policies and topics being presented for adoption. Member countries responded mostly with highlights of initiatives being undertaken in their countries. A seminar on creating the environment for the change in tackling NCDs attracted a lot of interest from Caribbean delegates. NCDA partner the Healthy Caribbean Coalition presented statements on NCDs and mental health.

The Africa RCM was held in Botswana with in person and with virtual attendance modalities. The Africa NCDs Network (ANN) in collaboration with the NCD Alliance and national alliances prepared and presented statements on agenda items related to NCDs and UHC. One was on the need to increase investment in strong, integrated health systems built on primary care foundations and to improve NCD prevention and care. The other was on the need for greater alcohol control policies to reduce the effects of this major NCD risk factor.

In the Eastern Mediterranean, the RCM emphasized the need for collaborative efforts in the region with the engagement of CSOs, and served as a platform for in-depth discussions on critical topics including the new model of care for Primary Health Care (PHC), the integration of NCDs in emergency settings, the regional framework for enhancing the health workforce in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, and the intersection of climate, environment, and health. The EM-NCDA was invited to present interventions and statements on each of these topics. Read this [blog from Dr Ibtihal Fadhil](#) [1] on her experience there.

The South-East Asia RCM convened to address pressing health issues within the region. The discussions primarily centered around the current state and the scope of work required to improve health outcomes. Notably, NCDs emerged as a priority topic, reflecting the growing health challenges in the region. The urgency of implementing NCD-focused activities was underscored, and the need for immediate and effective interventions. Members recognized the need for a more robust strategy to seamlessly incorporate NCD prevention, management, and treatment into existing

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healthcare frameworks. The discussions within the meeting also shed light on the importance of prioritizing mental health in future endeavors.

The Europe RCM was held in Astana, Kazakhstan and was attended by NCD Alliance CEO Katie Dain. This year marked 45 years since the signing of the historic Alma-Ata Declaration on PHC, and the mid-point of the European Programme of Work (EPW) 2020–2025 – “United Action for Better Health in Europe”. The RCM provided an opportunity for delegates to reflect on the current state of health and well-being across the Region, take stock of progress in delivering the EPW, and discuss what is needed to address current and future health challenges. You can read this [interview given by Ms Dain](#) [2] during the RCM on progress made towards strengthening primary care and gaps that still need to be closed.

The NCD Alliance applauds its member alliances for their important participation in these meetings and ensuring that NCDs remain high on global and regional health agendas.

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[2] <https://www.eureporter.co/kazakhstan-2/2023/10/20/interview-for-astana-conference-23-october-2023-with-katie-dain-ceo-of-ncd-alliance/>

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