

South Africa leads the world in setting time bound NCD targets ahead of UN HLM on NCDs

South Africa has set targets to radically reduce NCDs through a set of time-bound commitments, including a target to reduce salt intake to less than 5 g/day by per person by 2020. These targets were announced at a recent [National Summit on NCDs](#) [1] held on 12-13 September ahead of next week's UN High-Level Meeting.

President Jacob Zuma will be attending the High-Level Meeting and is expected to announce these commitments to member states. Professor Graham Macgregor, Chairman of World Action on Salt and Health (WASH), has issued the following statement: "South Africa has made a [pioneering declaration](#) [1] on NCDs following on from an NCD summit meeting in Johannesburg 12-13th September 2011, ahead of the UN High Level Meeting on NCDs to be held in New York next week.

South Africa will reduce the mean population intake of salt from the current level of 8-10g per day to less than 5 grams per day by 2020. Dr Motsoaledi, Minister of Health for South Africa stated that this would be done by a public health campaign and regulation of the food industry.

"A survey of major food companies in South Africa showed that they would welcome industry regulation to reduce salt as this gives a level playing field. This is in contrast to the US and UK where voluntary systems have resulted in some companies refusing to comply, making salt reduction much more difficult and less effective. "The burden of NCDs, including heart disease and strokes, is rapidly increasing. NCDs are the leading causes of preventable morbidity and disability and currently cause over 60% of global deaths, 80% of which occur in developing countries.

However, developed countries such as the EU, US, Canada and Australia have specifically removed the targets for reducing NCDs including a 5g salt target from the UN draft Political Declaration. This is in spite of the fact that they have their own targets and in spite of strong recommendations from developing countries such as the G77 and CARICOM countries. This is due to intensive lobbying from the tobacco and food industry. [Ref 1: British Medical Journal].

"Salt puts up our blood pressure, which is the leading cause worldwide of death and disability through the strokes, heart disease it causes. Salt reduction is the simplest and most cost effective measure to reduce NCDs and it is more cost effective than tobacco control for both developed and developing countries [Ref 2 & 3 NICE and Asaria].

"Achieving a long and healthy life, free from disease, is a right not just for South Africans but for everybody in the world. It is time that western governments stopped being pressurised by their tobacco and food industry and follow South Africa's example by setting specific targets for reducing NCDs including salt reduction to less than 5g a day particularly in developing countries where the major burden of NCDs lies.

"In the meantime developing countries need to take the lead from South Africa and set their own targets including salt reduction at the NCD summit in New York in order to prevent millions of deaths from strokes, and heart disease every year." ##END##

Notes to Editor

Go to www.worldactiononsalt.com [2] for more information or contact:

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South African NCD Targets:

- 1) Reduce by at least 25% the relative premature mortality (under 60 years of age) from Non-communicable Diseases

by 2020.

- 2) Reduce by 20% tobacco use by 2020.
- 3) Reduce by 20% the relative per capita consumption of alcohol by 2020.
- 4) Reduce mean population intake of salt to < 5grams per day by 2020.
- 5) Reduce by 10% the percentage of people who are obese and/or overweight by 2020
- 6) Reduce the prevalence of people with raised blood pressure by 20% by 2020 (through lifestyle and medication).
- 7) Screen all women at least every 5 years for cervical cancer by 2020
- 8) Screen all men above 40 years of age for prostate cancer by 2020
- 9) Increase the percentage of people controlled for hypertension, diabetes and asthma by 30% by 2020
- 10) Increase the number of people screened and treated for mental health by 30% by 2030

References:

1. Cohen D. Non Communicable Diseases. Will industry influence derail the UN Summit? BMJ 2011; 343:d5328
2. National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE). Guidance on the prevention of cardiovascular disease at the population level. <http://guidance.nice.org.uk/PH25> [5]
3. Asaria P, Chisholm D, Mathers C, Ezzati M, Beaglehole R. Chronic disease prevention: health effects and financial costs of strategies to reduce salt intake and control tobacco use. Lancet 2007;370:2044-53.

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[South Africa Declaration on NCDs.pdf](#) [6]

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Links

- [1] <http://www.ncdalliance.org/sites/default/files/South%20Africa%20Declaration%20on%20NCDs.pdf>
- [2] <http://www.worldactiononsalt.com>
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