
Template letter: Reach out to your governments about NCDs and UHC

Still from NCDA's Facing Forward video series

Reaching out to your government representatives is an effective way to help accelerate action on NCDs and Universal Health Coverage, making clear what you want and why it's needed. We've created this template letter that can be adapted to your context and organisation and will help align civil society messaging.

As the noncommunicable disease (NCD) community prepares for the United Nations High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage (UN HLM on UHC) in September, the NCD Alliance (NCDA) has prepared a [template letter](#) [1] that you can use from today to advocate to your government for immediate action on NCDs and UHC. The letter can be adapted to your context and organisation and will help align civil society messaging ahead of this key event.

The letter (available in English, French and Spanish) focuses on the Political Declaration on UHC that is now being negotiated by UN Member States in New York ahead of September's HLM. The text of the Declaration will be agreed before the HLM takes place on 21 September 2023.

[Download template letter](#) [1]

A call to integrate NCDs in UHC health benefits packages

Although NCDs account for 74% of deaths globally and the burden is disproportionately severe in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), where 85% of premature deaths from NCDs occur, many countries have been slow to integrate NCDs into UHC health benefits packages. The template letter calls for governments negotiating the Political Declaration to consider these recommendations from NCDA's global campaign on NCDs and UHC:

- The need for **investing** in the prevention and control of NCDs through sustainable and adequate resources for UHC. NCDA commends the UHC Political Declaration zero draft's reference to transitioning toward sustainable financing, domestic resource mobilization, and strengthening international cooperation. We further recommend aligning national spending targets with the Abuja Declaration's goal of allocating 15% of government expenditure to healthcare.
- **Accelerating** the implementation of quality NCD prevention and care services into UHC health benefit packages. NCDA applauds references to scaling up efforts for health promotion, equitable access to medicines, and strengthening health information systems. We stress the need to strengthen the continuum of care, including health promotion, prevention, diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation, and palliative care, and recommend the inclusion of legal and regulatory measures to promote intersectoral policies and improve access to essential medicines.

- The significance of **aligning** development and global health priorities to achieve UHC. We highlight the need for resilient health systems based on primary healthcare and a people-centred approach that ensures inclusivity and addresses the vulnerabilities of populations living with multiple chronic conditions, including NCDs.
- The importance of **engaging** people living with NCDs in decision-making processes, aiming to keep UHC people-centered. We recommend institutionalising mechanisms for inclusive health governance that involve patients and individuals living with chronic conditions, while addressing conflicts of interest and undue influence from industries that may harm public health.

NCDA has also prepared resources to assist governments in taking advantage of the opportunity provided by the UN HLM on UHC to advance the NCD prevention and control agenda globally. [NCDA messages on the Zero Draft of the Political Declaration on UHC](#) [2] detail key opportunities to strengthen the current draft by building on [NCDA Advocacy Priorities](#) [3].

Global Week for Action on NCDs

World leaders have committed to ensuring that everyone has access to healthcare, regardless of their ability to pay, by 2030 – this is what's known as UHC. But globally almost no progress has been made towards that promise. In many countries and communities, especially the most marginalised ones, healthcare is often paid for out-of-pocket. Those who cannot afford to pay their bills can end up paying with their lives. People living with NCDs are especially burdened with out-of-pocket expenses, as these diseases are chronic by nature and often require expensive long-term or lifelong care. This makes NCDs far more than a health issue – they are a major human rights and equity issue, as they unfairly burden the poorest and most vulnerable populations with disease, disability and death.

You can find more information, and find out how to act, on our [website for the Global Week for Action on NCDs](#) [4], which takes place 14 - 21 September 2023. With the theme of Bridging the care gap, the Global Week stresses that providing UHC is key to care.

[Visit the campaign website!](#) [5]

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