

**Statement by East Africa NCD Alliance, NCD Alliance (Global), and Civil Society partners  
Agenda Item 16: Health in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development  
WHO AFRO Regional Meeting, 19-23 August 2016, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

The 2011 Political Declaration on NCDs marked a watershed moment and an awakening to the need to address NCDs. There has since been significant progress at the global level – such as the prominent inclusion of NCDs in the SDGs with dedicated targets on NCD mortality and specific risk factors, and the development of the WHO Global Action Plan 2013-2020 and accompanying monitoring tools. All this reflects the urgency of the situation. However, this initial momentum has been slow in the Africa Region. As the 2015 WHO NCD Progress Monitor reveals, 74% of AFRO countries do not have an operational national strategy or plan that integrates the major NCDs and their shared risk factors.

NCDs represent the fastest growing disease burden in the Africa Region, and a major healthcare challenge in Africa in coming decades. While mortality due to infectious diseases decreased by 10% from 2000 to 2012, the mortality due to NCDs rose from 21% in 2000 to 30% in 2012. More than any other region, Africa is particularly unprepared and under-resourced to address NCDs. We can build upon the successes to date to address infectious diseases and we call for similar and urgent action now as the best hope to prevent millions of deaths due to NCDs.

This Regional Committee Meeting represents a great opportunity to take bold steps to drive action on NCDs in the Region. We therefore wish to express our disappointment that NCDs are not high on the agenda this year. Nonetheless, we commend WHO AFRO for developing a regional framework for NCD prevention and control, and we urge the discussion and adoption of the framework next year. Civil society stands prepared to support the development and implementation of such a necessary and welcome framework.

We also commend your initiative to address oral health through an integrated, multisectoral approach as part of the wider NCD response (Agenda item 7). However, NCDs require more direct action. A major problem is that there is **low prioritisation of NCDs in national planning**. Despite a universal recognition of the problem, this is not matched by action of most governments. NCDs are responsible for at least 25% of deaths and nearly half of disability but in most countries less than 2% of the health budget is allocated to NCDs. The level of importance accorded to NCDs is not adequate and this impedes progress. We therefore call on the RCM to use its influence for the following actions in Africa:

1. Expedite the development and implementation of national NCD policies and strategic plans which are integrated across sectors
2. Increase and ensure adequate and sustainable budgetary allocations for NCDs in line with recommendations of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda
3. Strengthen health systems to respond to NCDs care and treatment including integrating NCDs care and treatment at primary health care settings
4. Develop or where necessary adapt existing health information systems to collect comprehensive health data including NCDs to enable monitoring and appropriate planning.

Having noted the above, we want to wish you amicable and constructive deliberations in this Regional Committee Meeting.

**This statement is co-signed by the following partners**

1. East Africa NCD Alliance
2. NCD Alliance (Global)
3. Uganda NCD Alliance (UNCDA)
4. Tanzania NCD Alliance (TANCDA)
5. Zanzibar NCD Alliance (Z-NCDA)
6. Kenya NCD Alliance (KNCDA)
7. Rwanda NCD Alliance
8. Burundi NCD Alliance
9. Danish NCD Alliance (DNCDA)
10. African Heart Network (AHN)
11. Centre for Tobacco Control in Africa
12. Zambia Heart and Stroke foundation (ZAHESFO)
13. Patient Health Alliance of Non-government Organizations (PANGO) South African
14. Framework Convention Alliance – Africa
15. Young Professionals – Chronic Disease Network
16. Aarhus University
17. World Cancer Research Fund International
18. Norwegian Cancer Society
19. Action on Smoking and Health



