

## NCD Alliance Rapid Analysis

### WHO Draft Synthesis Report on Health in the Post-2015 Development Agenda

11 February 2013

#### Summary

The draft synthesis report recognises **health is a beneficiary of development, a contributor to development, and a key indicator** to measure the achievement of people-centred, rights-based, and equitable development goals. It addresses **NCDs as an emerging health priority for the post-2015 agenda** and places a greater emphasis on public health, health promotion, behaviour change, and disease prevention. It aligns with the belief that the post-2015 framework needs to ensure **that people, not disease, are the priority** in global health. **But more work needs to be done to make the case for NCDs as a poverty and development issue in the report, and clearly define specific goals, targets, and indicators for NCD prevention and control in the post-2015 framework.**

#### 1. Background

The World Health Organization (WHO) held an online consultation from October to December 2012 on how health should be positioned within the successor agenda to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The consultation asked a number of questions, including the strengths and weaknesses of the current MDGs, the priorities for global health now and in the decades to come, and how health goals should be framed in the post-2015 development framework

Based upon over 100 consultation responses, along with several in-person consultations, WHO has released a [draft synthesis report on Health in the Post-2015 Development Agenda](#).

The NCD Alliance submitted a [paper on health and non-communicable diseases \(NCDs\) in the post-2015 framework](#) for inclusion in this report. The final report will be released in early March, and will inform a high-level dialogue in Gaborone, Botswana on 5-6 March 2013.

The draft report incorporates much of the broad health language the NCD Alliance proposed in our submission. It adequately frames NCDs as a present and future challenge to development, citing both the political mandate and the epidemiological data as support for inclusion in the future framework. However, **the report does not fully articulate the causal or beneficial linkages between NCDs and development**. Below is a summary of the key messages in the report, as well as some **suggestions for improving the report and questions to enhance your feedback on the report**.

#### 2. Key Messages

##### Health in Post-2015

- Recognises that health is a **beneficiary of development, a contributor to development**, and a key indicator of what people-centred, rights-based and equitable development seeks to achieve.
- Health goals in the new development agenda need to be broader and more holistic to ensure that **people are the priority in global health, not the disease**.
- Recognizes that **“health is wealth,”** whereby a healthy population can improve national economic productivity and capacity.

The NCD Alliance was founded by:



- Suggests a **two-pronged approach to health** which tackles 1) the underlying determinants that cause or contribute to ill health and 2) creates health systems that are proactive, preventive, and can provide continuing care and on-going management for all health issues.
- Identifies accountability through multisectoral partnerships as the **cornerstone of action in future global health**.

### Health and the MDGs

- Broad agreement that having three out of eight goals directly related **to improving health outcomes has raised the profile of global health** to the highest political level, increased development assistance for health and improved health outcomes in low- and middle-income countries.
- Clear, concise goals with measurable targets and specific indicators are one of the greatest strengths of the MDGs.
- The focus on particular diseases and targets has led to the **neglect of overarching issues**, such as health system strengthening, health promotion and disease prevention, and the underlying determinants of health.

### Emerging Issues- NCDs:

- The post-2015 development agenda offers a **unique opportunity to focus attention on NCDs alongside the MDGs** and to harness new resources needed to address all health challenges.
- It recognises **NCDs as an emerging issue in LMICs given their epidemiological trends** and attributes the rise and causes of NCDs to complex global patterns of urbanisation, globalisation, and economic development which increase exposure to the leading NCD risk factors: tobacco and alcohol consumption, unhealthy diets and physical inactivity.
- To address NCDs and other emerging issues in the post-2015 development framework, the report suggests **a greater emphasis should be placed on public health, health promotion, behaviour change, and disease prevention**, with resources directed to addressing risk factors and creating the conditions for good health.

### Recommendations on Goals and Indicators:

The challenge for the post-2015 framework is to develop goals that are universally relevant but nationally applicable, take into consideration current differentiating national circumstances when the goals go into effect, and consider national capacity to measure the goals (i.e., weak health information systems). Based on these considerations, the report suggests the follow formulation for a health goal in the post-2015 framework:

- The report recommends **maximising healthy life expectancy as a possible overarching health goal**, since it will address the need for action on the determinants of health and on the root causes of ill-health, preventable disability, and premature death. Indicators could measure improved survival, reduced burden of disease, and lower levels of risk factor exposure.
- It views **Universal Health Coverage (UHC) as one of the means to enable the achievement of healthier life expectancy**, by bringing equity and fairness as well as the need for an integrated approach in the provision of health services. Indicators would measure coverage of essential services, increased equity and financial risk protection, and the strengthening of health systems. Acknowledges the importance of a **'Health in All Policies' approach** thus **suggests health indicators be used to measure the impact other goals have on health** (such as migration, education, water and sanitation, gender equality, youth empowerment and employment, environmental sustainability, population dynamics, and good governance).

### 3. NCD Alliance Rapid Analysis of the Draft Report

- The synthesis report should **incorporate concrete examples to illustrate the ways in which NCDs both effect and benefit from development**. Linkages between NCDs and development, including existing MDG health priorities, must be clear in the post-2015 framework. (e.g., MDG links on pg. 12-14)
- Historically considered to be diseases of the wealthy, the incidence of NCDs in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) is increasing at a faster rate and affecting populations at a younger age than elsewhere in the world. **A health goal in the post-2015 framework that is relevant to all countries, nationally applicable, and formulated to reduce inequalities is imperative for NCD prevention and control.** (pg. 32)
- Health in the post-2015 agenda needs to **drive an integrated response to health and ensure action on the synergies between different health priorities**, including NCDs and communicable diseases, maternal, newborn, and child health, and sexual and reproductive health.
- In articulating the overarching health goal, the **focus should be on reducing preventable morbidity and mortality by maximising healthy life expectancy**. It should be underpinned by targets and indicators that drive progress on priority health issues, including NCDs, with the “25 by 25” mortality target as an example for measuring healthy life expectancy. (pg 22, 33)
- The proposal for **Universal Health Coverage (UHC) as an enabler/means to the achieving healthy life expectancy** should be supported, provided UHC is defined in broad terms in order to address the continuum of NCD prevention, control, treatment, and care, (including palliative care). Emphasis should be placed not just on the availability of services, but also on improving access to quality care for all, as well as minimising the financial risk associated with accessing health care services. (pg. 22-23, 33)
- The specific targets and indicators under the health goal **should explicitly link to the agreed global monitoring framework** on the prevention and control of NCDs, to be adopted by the World Health Assembly in May 2013.
- A ‘health in all policies’ approach that emphasises **the need to develop health indicators across the social, economic, and environmental pillars of development**, should be promoted, as NCDs affect and are affected by the three pillars. While health systems strengthening is a necessary global ambition, a health goal solely focused on the health system will not enable the multisectoral response needed for NCDs.
- In addition to goals that support strong, functional health systems, the post-2015 framework should emphasise the importance of **personal agency, empowerment, self-determination, education and health literacy, and self-management of diseases throughout the life-course** to ensure a life of health and wellbeing.

#### **Questions for further consideration in responding to the report:**

- What are the specific interdependent linkages between health/NCDs and development in the context of emerging issues/the post-2015 framework?
- What suggestions can be given regarding incorporating a ‘health in all policies’ approach to address NCDs across the different development dimensions in the post-2015 agenda?
- For NCDs, what are the strengths and weaknesses of an overarching goal focused on healthy life expectancy? For UHC?
- In addition to the indicators articulated by the report, what specific indicators could be suggested to measure the NCD burden under a goal for healthy life expectancy?

Additional resources:

- [NCD Alliance materials on NCDs in the post-2015 agenda](#) (think pieces, post-2015 advocacy toolkit, and submissions to WHO and other thematic consultations)
- [Information on the global health thematic consultation](#), via the World We Want 2015
- [A set of papers on NCDs in the post-2015 framework](#), including the NCD Alliance submission
- WHO's page on [health in the post-2015 agenda](#)
- Beyond 2015 [civil society position paper on health in the post-2015 agenda](#)
- UN Task Team documents:
  - [Report – Realizing the Future We Want for All](#)
  - [Think piece on health in the post-2015 UN agenda](#)