

NCD Alliance response to World We Want consultation on OWG Focus Areas document

1. Regarding the 'focus areas document' overall: What do you agree with and what is missing? (400 word max)

The NCD Alliance welcomes this focus areas document as a starting point for discussions to further define the SDG framework, including specific goals, targets, and indicators. We recognize this list as an initial account of areas of convergence.

We strongly agree with the inclusion of health and population dynamics as standalone focus area for the SDG framework, with an emphasis on improving life expectancy as a universal priority. We also welcome the acknowledgement of health as an area interlinked with other sustainable development priorities. The SDG framework must protect and promote health, and specifically non-communicable diseases (NCDs), in all dimensions and across all thematic/focus areas.

This multidimensional and multisectoral view of health is especially important for the prevention and control of NCDs (cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and chronic respiratory diseases, plus mental health and neurological disorders), including the efforts needed to reduce exposure to the main risk factors that drive the NCD burden worldwide – tobacco use, unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, and the harmful use of alcohol. Emphasis on the interlinkages will facilitate the creation of a post-2015 framework that promotes action on the social and environmental determinants of health alongside efforts to strengthen health systems in all countries.

We agree with the emphasis on ensuring food security and nutrition, and support expanding this going forward to address all forms of malnutrition, including targets to address overnutrition/obesity. The attention to the impact of urbanization, safe transport, gender equality, and climate on human health and wellbeing is important and should be retained in the framework.

The focus areas document would also be greatly strengthened by recognizing the need for the post-2015 framework to be based on a universal, equitable, human rights-based approach, with attention to the poorest, most vulnerable, and marginalized populations. A critical weakness of this document is the lack of attention to the link between poverty and poverty eradication to health and population dynamics. Poverty eradication depends on healthy human development, and thus requires strengthened links between social and economic dimensions.

2. Per specific focus area, what do you agree with and how would you improve it? (400 word max)

The NCD Alliance welcomes the inclusion of health and population dynamics as a distinct focus area, and thus as a standalone goal in the post-2015 sustainable development framework. We strongly agree with the emphasis on improving life expectancy as a universally shared ambition.

A health SDG formulated as *maximizing healthy life expectancy across all stages of life* is outcome-focused, applicable to all countries, and will drive progress in health across all priority issues and sustainable development dimensions. We also agree with the framing of health as relevant to the environmental dimension of sustainable development, as and as interlinked to other SDG focus areas such as food security and nutrition, and promoting equality, to name a few.

The NCD Alliance commends the inclusion of “*addressing non-communicable diseases (NCDs)*” as a priority for health. In addition, we agree with the attention to strengthening health systems; ensuring adequate, affordable, and accessible health services for all; the need to take up the unfinished business of the health-related MDGs, including sexual and reproductive health and rights; ensuring access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all; promoting healthy diets and lifestyles; and the need to provide for the health needs of older people and people with disabilities, all of which are areas of vital importance for NCDs.

To improve this section, we recommend the following improvements:

- Include link to **poverty eradication**;
- Expand “addressing non-communicable diseases” to **addressing the prevention and control of NCDs, including mental health and neurological disorders**;
- Ensure the provision of health services **across the continuum of care** (prevention, promotion, early detection, treatment, rehabilitation, and care, including palliative care);
- Specifically include the need to reduce exposure to the main risk factors driving the NCD epidemic, namely **tobacco use, unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, and harmful use of alcohol**;
- Ensure access to **safe, affordable, quality-assured essential medicines and technologies**;
- Attention to the **health needs and rights of older people, people with disabilities, and children and youth**.