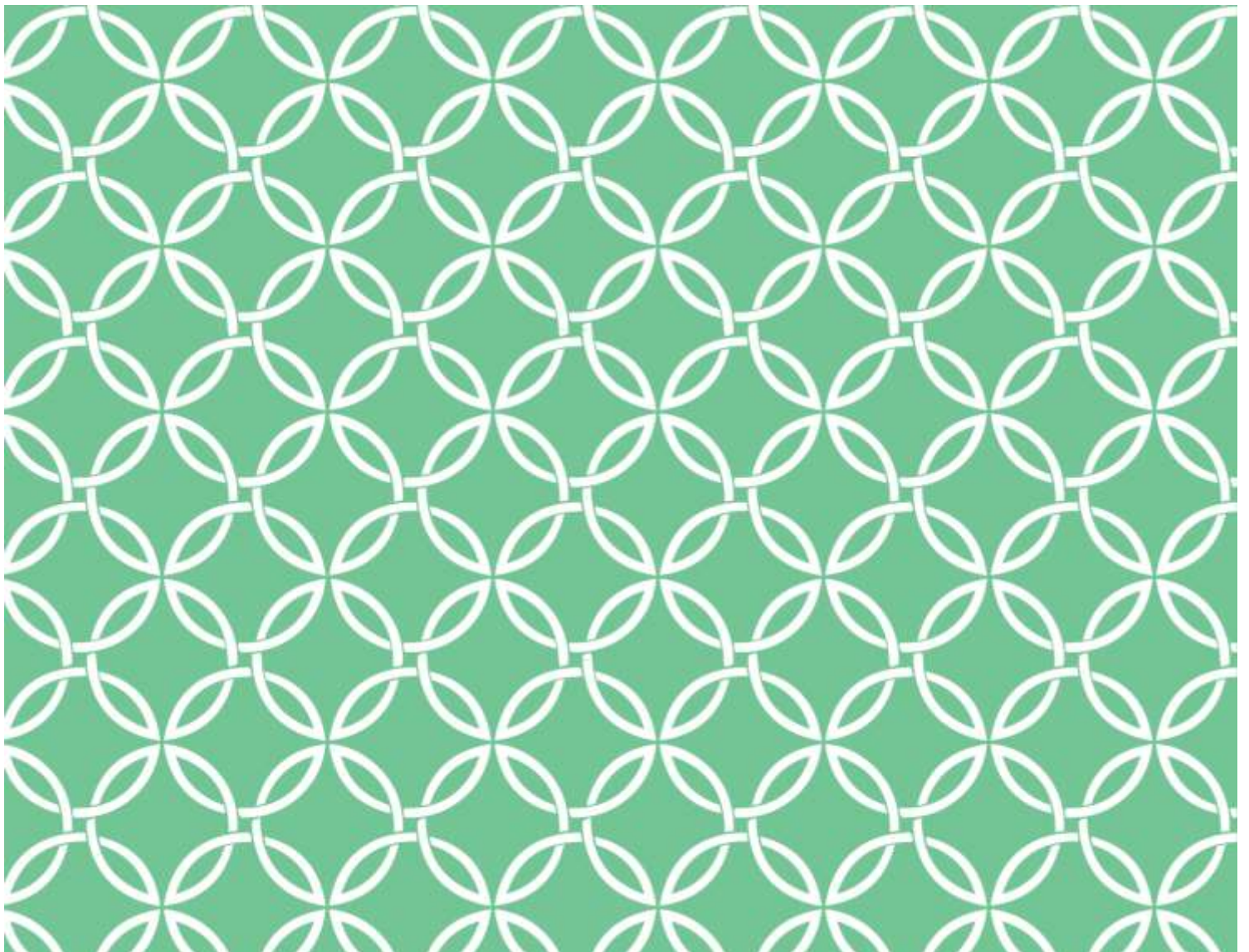


United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases

2022-2025 strategy



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INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs) provides a platform for cooperation among the United Nations (UN), governments and non-state actors to support governments in addressing NCDs and mental health conditions. The Task Force was established by the UN Secretary-General in 2013 and reports annually to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the UN.

The Task Force's strategy for 2019–2021 set four strategic priorities: (i) supporting countries in delivering multisectoral action; (ii) mobilizing resources; (iii) harmonizing action and forging partnerships; and (iv) exemplifying UN reform (1). These priorities remained largely relevant at the end of 2021 and in line with the Task Force's terms of reference (2) and mandates established in UN General Assembly political declarations and ECOSOC resolutions¹ (Annex 1).

NCDs such as cancer, diabetes, heart disease, chronic respiratory diseases and stroke as well as mental health conditions have a major impact on health and well-being and are responsible for about 74% of deaths globally every year. These diseases and their major risk factors (tobacco use, alcohol use, unhealthy diet and lack of physical activity) also have significant negative consequences on economic productivity and financial stability for individuals and households: NCDs and mental health conditions are critical development issues.

Countries continue to face challenges in responding to the rapid increase in the rates of NCDs and mental health conditions within the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A key challenge is multisectoral action to reduce the burden of NCDs and improve mental health as part of a "One Health" approach to advancing health and health equity more broadly and to meet commitments for achieving health as a human right. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the challenge of responding to NCDs and mental health conditions (3–6):

- NCDs and their metabolic, behavioural and environmental risk factors are associated with greater susceptibility to SARS-CoV-2 infection and greater risks of severe disease and death from COVID-19.
- Mental health conditions are also associated with increased risks of severe disease and death from COVID-19.
- The pandemic is severely disrupting care for people living with NCDs and mental health conditions, and the pressure on health services is likely to increase in the long term.
- The pandemic and measures taken to respond to it (e.g., lockdowns) are increasing:
 - the rates of mental health conditions, including mental, neurological and substance use disorders (7); and
 - for some people, certain behavioural risk factors for NCDs, such as physical inactivity, an unhealthy diet and harmful use of alcohol.

The 2021 publication *Saving lives, spending less* states that "As a public health investment, NCD prevention and control is a remarkable bargain which yields a return of US\$ 7 for every US\$ invested by 2030, saving millions of lives and adding millions of healthy life years lived" and that "Preventing NCDs will also help vulnerable populations better resist future pandemics by improving people's cardiovascular and overall physical health" (8). Importantly, investing in the prevention and control of NCDs generates billions of US dollars in economic gains that are crucial to meeting broader development goals.

Ever greater investment is required of Member States and their development partners, including the UN system, to: (i) strengthen political action on NCDs; (ii) build capacity throughout government for policy development, coherence and implementation (multisectoral action); (iii) increase domestic and international financing; (iv) enhance understanding of the impact of economic, market and commercial factors and take action; and (v) strengthen health systems as part of achieving universal health coverage (9).

Between 2019 and 2021, the Task Force increased its global importance by supporting 39 countries (Annex 2). Further details are provided in the reports of the WHO Director-General on the work of the Task Force submitted by the UN Secretary-General to ECOSOC in 2019, 2020 and 2021 (10).

The 2022–2025 strategy outlines the way forward for ensuring that the UN system as a whole continues to support Member States in developing and implementing their action plans, in line with the WHO Global NCD action plan, 2013–2030, the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) and its protocols and the WHO Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2013–2030, including its evidence-based interventions, many of which require action beyond the health sector. The end-point of the strategy is in line with most of the Global NCD targets (11) and those of the Fourth high-level meeting on NCDs (12) for 2025.

The 2022–2025 strategy will also support the 2023–2030 Road map for the Global NCD Action Plan 2013–2030, which is being finalized (13). This states: (i) that the Task Force provides a mechanism for coordinating the support of the UN and intergovernmental organizations for national responses to NCD-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Global NCD action plan 2013–2030 and implementation of the WHO FCTC and its protocols; (ii) that the Task Force provides support for stronger governance for NCDs and mental health nationally, among governments and the UN system; and (iii) that the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund to Catalyse Country Action for NCDs and Mental Health, which was established in 2021 by WHO, the UN Children's Fund and the UN Development Programme, will enable implementation of the Road map (14). Delivering the strategy will require action and coordination among its Members at all levels and with other relevant platforms, such as the UN Nutrition, Health, Environment and Climate Change Coalition and the WHO Global Coordination Mechanism on the Prevention and Control of NCDs.

¹ Reports of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of NCDs, ECOSOC, the UN General Assembly and the World Health Assembly

The strategy builds on the experience of the 2019–2021 strategy and the findings of the mid-point evaluation of the Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of NCDs 2013–2030 (Annex 3).

The 2022–2025 strategy continues in the direction of the 2019–2021 strategy as the strategic priorities remain as relevant as ever. Nevertheless, flexibility and responsiveness remain crucial for the Task Force to be most effective. Thus, the strategy will be updated as and when required in order to incorporate and reflect new or emerging global policies and/or resolutions. The focus during the next 4 years must be for even greater action for achieving the four strategic priorities described below, with broader developments to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, including effective responses to and recovery from COVID-19.

The 2022–2025 strategy will be evaluated before the Fourth high-level meeting in 2025 to contribute to preparation of a further strategy that takes into account the outcomes of the Fourth meeting and the action necessary to meet the 2030 SDG targets.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. Support countries in accelerating multisectoral action towards the SDG targets related to NCDs and mental health.

The Task Force will continue to advocate for whole-of-government, whole-of-society action and respond to the increasing demand from countries for context-specific technical assistance to support national action and capacity-building to attain the NCD-related SDG targets and implementation of the WHO FCTC and its protocols, including “building back better” in the context of national COVID-19 response and recovery plans.

The Task Force will:

- advocate at the highest level of governments for greater investment in the prevention and control of NCDs, in support for mental health and in implementing the WHO FCTC and its protocols, including whole-of-government and whole-of-society actions;
- provide and facilitate technical assistance to countries, both directly and through UN country teams and their respective regional offices, by identifying and sharing knowledge on best practices and cost-effective investments for NCD prevention and control and mental health;
- serve as an entry point for countries to demand joint UN technical support; and
- highlight examples of whole-of-government and whole-of-society action, including through meetings of the Friends of the Task Force and Task Force awards.

2. Mobilize resources for development of national actions to achieve the SDG targets related to NCDs and mental health.

The Task Force will mobilize political, financial and technical resources to support governments, the UN and other development partners in building strong, sustained responses to NCDs and mental health conditions.

The Task Force will:

- ensure that the UN Multi-partner Trust Fund to Catalyse Country Action for NCDs and Mental Health is fully capitalized and operational to support governments and their development partners in scaling up multisectoral action on NCDs and mental health, including through a “One Health” approach and through Strategic priority 1;
- ensure that the Multi-partner Trust Fund provides support for action on NCDs and mental health that is aligned with the countries’ plans for COVID-19 response and recovery;

- work with Member States and development partners to ensure that the activities of the Multi-partner Trust Fund are aligned with existing and future financing mechanisms for NCDs and mental health;
- continue to build the technical and financial resource base of the UN system to support national responses, including through UN joint programming, to provide more effective support to countries in responding to NCDs and mental health conditions;
- encourage multisectoral action to support Member States in designing and implementing whole-of-government, whole-of society policies and programmes to achieve better public health outcomes; and
- promote imposition of “health taxes” as a means for improving health and raising revenue for socioeconomic development.

3. Harmonize action and forge cross-sectoral partnerships

The Task Force will support countries by harmonizing its work with that of other global health and development initiatives and forging multi-stakeholder partnerships and alliances at all levels to achieve public health and SDG targets related to NCDs and mental health (15).

The Task Force will:

- identify synergies with relevant global development institutions, partnerships and initiatives (for, e.g., health, education, economics, environment, trade) and promote cooperation and joint action in the context of the road map 2023–2030 for implementation of the WHO Global action plan for the prevention and control of NCDs 2023–2030, the 2013–2030 WHO Comprehensive mental health action plan, the Global action plan for healthy lives and well-being for all (16) and other relevant UN policies, strategies and programmes established to support countries in work on NCDs and mental health, as part of universal health coverage and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda;
- extend and form new partnerships with governments and non-state actors (including, community-led interventions), including UN joint programmes, collaborations and thematic groups, while ensuring that Task Force members are protected from undue influence by any form of vested interest (paragraph 22 of reference 2);
- advocate for and support effective, efficient collaborative partnerships and ensure that countries’ domestic resources and development assistance are optimally planned and used for “best buys” and other recommended interventions to deliver maximum impact; and
- promote a “One health” approach to bringing sectors together to support countries in developing and implementing programmes and policies to achieve better public health outcomes.

4. Exemplify an ever more effective UN system

The Task Force will be a beacon of excellence among UN and development partners, working as one, proactively and responsively to support governments and their partners in achieving the SDG targets for NCDs and mental health.

The Task Force will:

- encourage its members to build their technical and advocacy capacity in accordance with the mandates of their agencies and strengthen global, regional and national collaboration among its members, in line with the “best buys” and effective interventions endorsed by the World Health Assembly and with countries’ responses to and recovery from COVID-19;
- promote inclusion of NCD-related SDG targets and outcomes in UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, policies, strategies and plans at national level and support resource mobilization for their delivery;
- promote a human rights-based approach to the prevention and treatment of NCDs and mental health by: (i) promoting human rights as the overarching principle in the treatment and prevention of NCDs, in line with human rights instruments such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child; (ii) ensuring that the outputs, advocacy and messaging of the Task Force substantively integrate human rights; (iii) supporting implementation of UN, ECOSOC and World Health Assembly resolutions, including the WHO NCD global action plan, 2013–2030 and the Comprehensive mental health action plan 2013–2030; (iv) participating in joint programming missions and their follow-up as resources allow; (v) integrating human rights into the work of joint programmes and thematic groups; and, to support these actions, establish a new cross-agency human rights group;
- encourage the governing bodies of its members’ agencies to consider NCDs and mental health in the context of the WHO “triple billion targets” and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and
- encourage its members to implement policies for healthy (including smoke-free) workplaces and the model policy for agencies of the UN system on preventing tobacco industry interference.

MONITORING AND EVALUATING RESULTS AND IMPACT

It is sometimes difficult to identify progress in countries that is directly attributable to the Task Force. The Task Force can, however, demonstrate its contributions to wider achievement of the NCD-related SDG targets.

INDICATIVE MONITORING FRAMEWORK

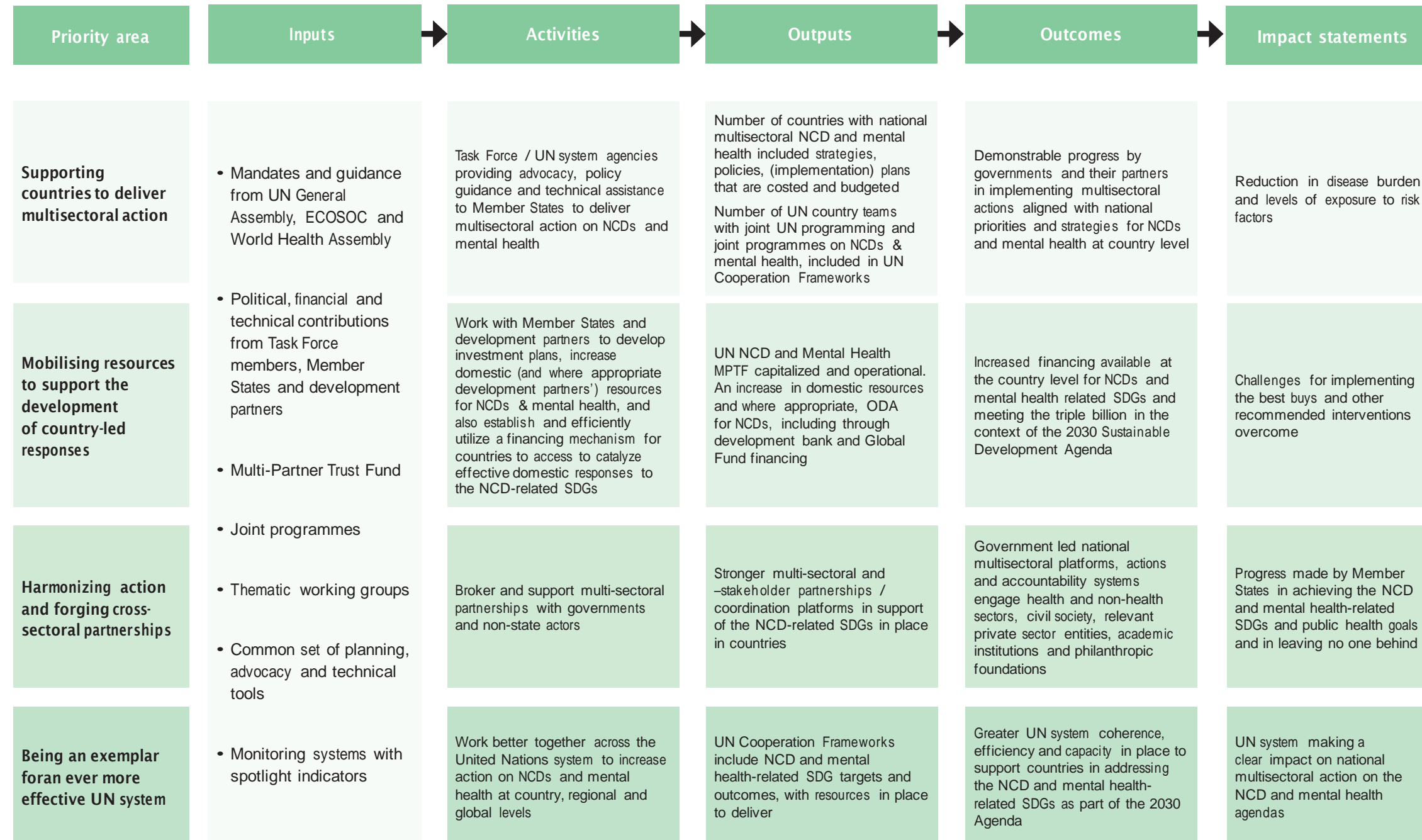
Indicator	Success as compared with a baseline in 2021	Source of information
Supporting countries to accelerate multisectoral action on the NCD- and mental health-related SDG targets		
1. Number of countries that request and receive policy guidance and technical support from the Task Force for which there is evidence that recommendations are being implemented	50 countries request and receive support from the Task Force or two or more of its members at global or national level	Task Force reports of countries' demands, responses to those demands and recommendations and their implementation
2. Number of UN-led global, regional and national joint programmes and initiatives in place, resourced and delivering at national level	Increases in the numbers of new joint programmes, projects, collaborations and initiatives financed and operational with impact at national level, with their impact on COVID-19 response and recovery described Evidence that joint programmes, projects, collaborations and initiatives are delivering even stronger support to countries, with their impact on COVID-19 response and recovery described.	Reports and assessments of programmes, projects, collaborations and initiatives
Mobilizing resources to support the development of national responses to achieve the SDG targets related to NCDs and mental health		
3. Multi-partner TrustFund capitalized and disbursing funds to countries	Fund capitalized and countries accessing funding and benefiting from technical assistance First wave of support aligned with countries' responses to and recovery from COVID-19	Multi-partner Trust Fund reports
4. Number of countries with projects funded by multilateral development banks and by the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria that include SDG targets related to NCDs and mental health	Increase in the number of countries that received funding for projects from development banks Increase in the number of global fund grants for action on NCDs and mental health in line with the Global Fund policies on co-morbidity and co-infection	World Bank and regional development bank reports Global Fund reports
5. Number of countries supported by the Task Force to increase domestic and/or development assistance funding for NCDs and mental health	30 countries received support from the Task Force in mobilizing additional domestic and/or development assistance funding for NCDs and mental health	Reports and surveys from countries that received support

The Task Force reports annually to ECOSOC on its results and impact through the WHO Director-General. Ten indicators are used to evaluate results and impact during implementation of the Strategy.

A small working group will be established to lead monitoring and evaluation of the indicative monitoring framework.

Indicator	Success as compared with a baseline in 2021	Source of information
Harmonizing action and forging cross-sectoral partnerships		
6. Number of countries that receive support from the Task Force and/or its members to strengthen multistakeholder coordination and action	Increased number of countries that have functional multisectoral coordination mechanisms for NCDs and mental health	Task Force reports
7. Operational partnerships between governments and the private sector catalysed by UN system	New partnerships in place at global, regional and national levels	Task Force reports
8. Countries in which the Task Force has catalysed multi-agency, multi-sectoral action for the prevention and control of NCDs and improving mental health	New partnerships in place at country level	Task Force reports
Exemplifying an ever more effective UN system		
9. Number of countries for which Cooperation frameworks include SDG targets related to NCDs and/or mental health, including target 3.a on implementation of the WHO FCTC, with evidence of funds available for joint programming and implementation	Increased number of Cooperation frameworks that include NCDs and mental health in joint funding for action	Global survey
10. Task Force members have prioritized national action aligned with the "best buys" endorsed by the World Health Assembly and effective interventions, in line with countries' response to and recovery from COVID-19	Action taken forward by members in line with the briefs of individual Task Force agencies and the strategic approaches common to NCDs and COVID-19 set out in reference 4	Reports from members
11. Task Force members implement healthy workplace policies and the model policy for agencies of the United Nations system on preventing tobacco industry interference (17)	Increased number of agency campuses that are smoke-free and implement policies to encourage healthy diets and physical activity Increased number of agencies that implement the model policy	Reports from members
12. Proportion of Task Force activities and outputs that include substantive action to promote human rights	Human rights systematically reflected in Task Force activities and outputs	Task Force reports

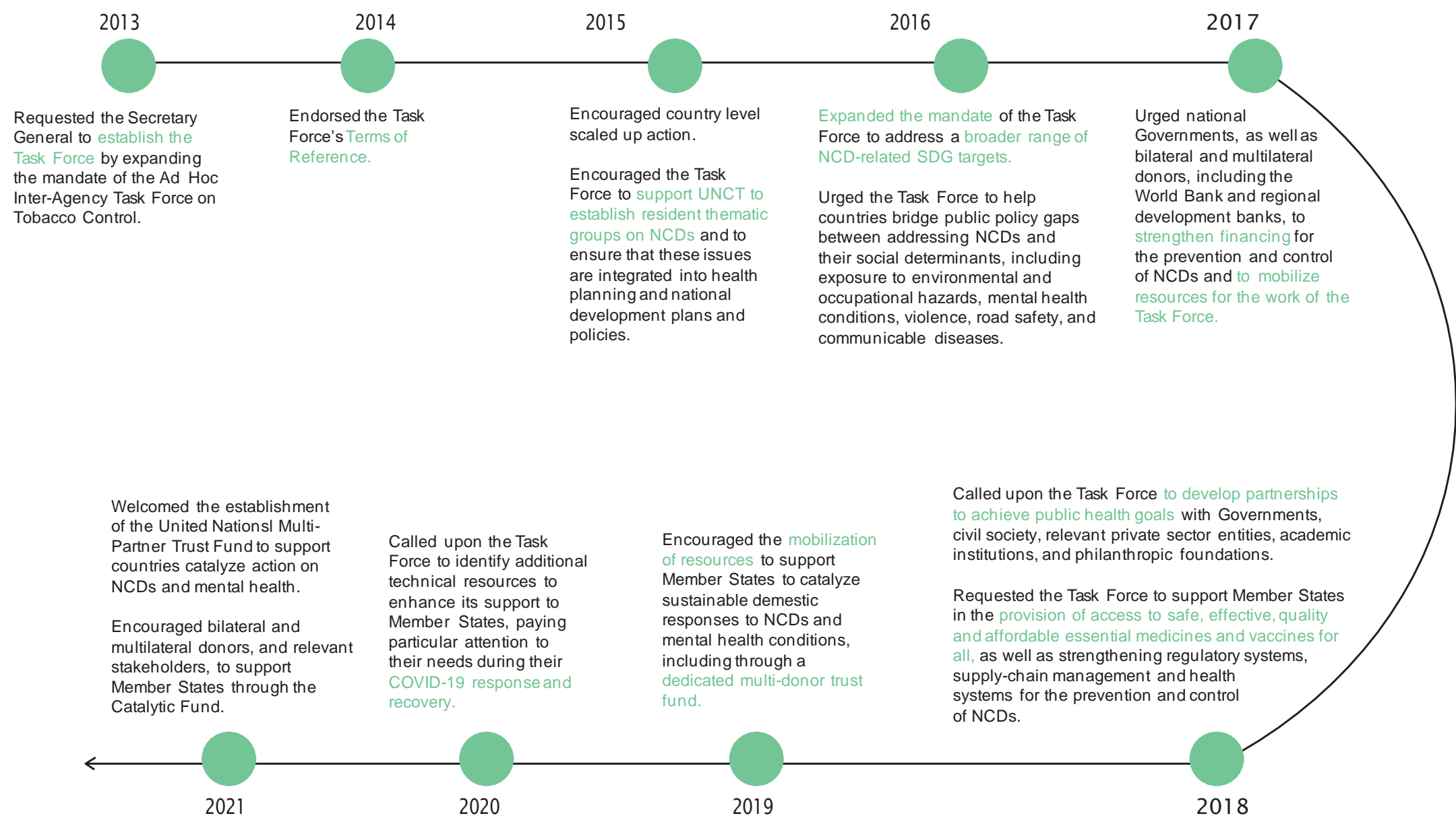
LOGIC AND CHANGE MODEL (9, 15)



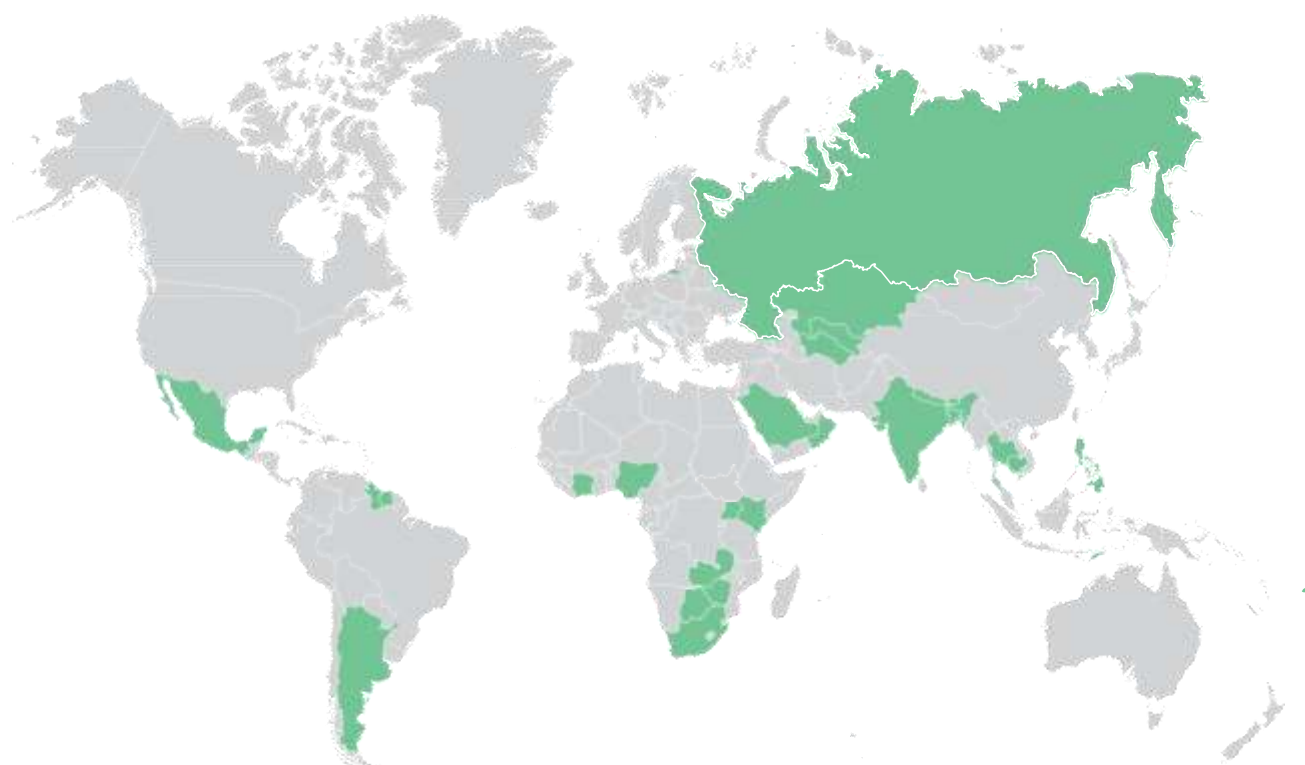
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ANNEX 1. KEY ELEMENTS OF ECOSOC RESOLUTIONS ON THE WORK OF THE TASK FORCE, 2013–2021



ANNEX 2. COUNTRIES THAT RECEIVED SUPPORT FROM THE TASK FORCE DURING THE PERIOD OF THE 2019–2021 STRATEGY



The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of WHO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. Dotted and dashed lines on maps represent approximate border lines for which there may not yet be full agreement.

Data source: Task Force Secretariat
Map production: Task Force Secretariat
World Health Organization
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ANNEX 3. MID-POINT EVALUATION OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WHO GLOBAL ACTION PLAN FOR THE PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF NCDs

A mid-point evaluation was conducted in 2020 to assess achievement of the six objectives of the 2013–2030 NCD Global Action Plan and to document the lessons learnt by international partners, non-state actors and WHO during its implementation in Member States (1). The work of the Task Force was included in the evaluation.

The work of the Task Force

“One of the key successes of the NCD-GAP, and the actions that flowed from it, has been to raise the profile of NCDs internationally.” The Task Force is cited as an example.

Paragraph 9, page iii

“While there has been some success in promoting multisectoral action (e.g. across the UN through the work of the Task Force), the response to NCDs continues to be seen largely as a health issue.”

Paragraph 26, page ix

“WHO has been active and successful in its leading and convening role in raising the profile of NCDs internationally and with Member States through mechanisms including high-level meetings, the WHO Independent High-level Commission on NCDs and the Task Force. In their feedback, Member States identified a wide range of ways in which WHO had provided technical support tailored to the country context, including support to develop national NCD plans, to develop investment cases (through the Task Force), to respond to specific risk factors and to carry out surveys of risk factors. This support was provided through engagement of all levels of WHO, country offices (where relevant), regional offices and headquarters, and through the Task Force.”

From Box S2, page ix

“...Some countries wish greater engagement of Task Force at the country level, including for follow-up and evaluation of visits. ... UN agencies mostly lack any specific budget for work on NCDs so this reduces the possibility of developing joint programmes. These can also be hampered by UN agencies having very different business models from each other ... There are some concerns that the response to NCDs remains too “health-focused” ... Global health agencies and programmes have created siloes that have failed to integrate NCDs despite potential to do so in many areas.”

Examples of challenges facing the Task Force. Taken from Box 4. Key achievements of the Task Force and some challenges facing it, page 9

“The Task Force has effectively convened and supported coordination between UN agencies globally, regionally and in-country, including through high-profile country visits which have raised the profile of NCDs with national governments and with UN agencies in-country. Progress on joint action has been hampered by lack of buy-in at all levels and adequate resourcing for the NCD agenda across the UN sector.”

Conclusions and lessons learnt, C11 paragraph 30, page xii

“The Task Force, WHO and international partners to continue with plans to introduce a Catalytic/Multi-Partner Trust Fund for NCDs.”

Recommendation R1 (bullet 2) page xii

“The Task Force and the ECOSOC to consider how they can provide further support to countries, promote joint activities between UN agencies and further build support for NCD responses among the senior leadership of UN agencies. Specifically:

- > he Task Force and ECOSOC to quantify and identify necessary resources and options for how to respond to country requests including for ongoing support and follow-up, including NCDs in the context of national COVID-19 response and recovery plans.
- > The Task Force and ECOSOC to identify ways in which more joint actions can be conducted.
- > The Task Force and ECOSOC to identify ways in which support for NCDs can be built at senior levels across the United Nations.”

Recommendation R11, page xvi

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