



Time to Deliver – WHO European High-level Conference on Noncommunicable Diseases: “Achieving Sustainable Development Goal targets in the WHO European Region through prevention and management of noncommunicable diseases over the life-course”

Scope and purpose/2

**Ashgabat, Turkmenistan
9-10 April 2019**

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Scope and purpose

The first European Conference on the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases was held in December 2013. It led to the adoption of the Ashgabat Declaration on the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases in the Context of Health 2020, later endorsed by the WHO Regional Committee for Europe at its 64th session in 2014. The Declaration was a landmark for Europe. It reinforced international mandates on noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) and emphasized the paramount importance of tobacco control, people-centred health systems, strengthened information systems to support monitoring and evaluation of NCD programmes, intersectoral action for NCD prevention and control, as well as national plans and target setting.

The year 2018 witnessed incredible global mobilization for the prevention and management of NCDs. Member States, WHO and partners expanded their commitments and the scope of their work to achieve ambitious targets. The third United Nations High-level Meeting on NCDs and a series of high-level international meetings and conferences on the health system response to NCDs, primary health care, global mental health and air pollution will serve as context and background for the WHO European High-level Conference on Noncommunicable Diseases in April 2019.

While European Member States have made significant progress in addressing the global NCD agenda, now is the time to review advances and decide on the next steps for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 and reducing inequities across the Region. More progress is needed in areas such as tobacco use, harmful use of alcohol, obesity, unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, hypertension and diabetes. In April 2019, only 11 years will remain to achieve the SDG targets and potentially save millions of lives.

The conference will follow up on the commitments made at the United Nations High-level Meeting on NCDs and seek to help countries with implementation. This includes strengthening the integration of mental health and air pollution into the NCD agenda. The conference will reinforce the urgency of action and the spiralling consequences of inaction, and will focus on how global commitments and experiences can be acted on at the country level. The Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of NCDs in the WHO European Region 2016–2025 includes interventions to promote mental health and clean air. It is supported by specific frameworks for addressing four main NCD risk factors: tobacco use, harmful use of alcohol, poor nutrition and

physical inactivity. The United Nations High-level Meeting on NCDs confirmed that the scope of action at the global level would include mental health conditions as a fifth disease area (in addition to cardiovascular diseases, cancer, respiratory diseases and diabetes) and air pollution as a fifth NCD risk factor.

The 53 Member States of the WHO European Region will be invited to send high-level and technical representatives to present their experiences of reducing premature mortality from NCDs and to discuss the feasibility of implementing successful interventions in other countries. The conference will also involve representatives of WHO headquarters and all relevant United Nations and other international governmental and nongovernmental agencies, with a view to identifying further synergies between the work on NCDs, mental health and air pollution at the country level in support of faster progress on NCDs as set out in the SDGs.

Several topical background papers will be prepared prior to the conference with a view to facilitating discussions and informing the expected outcomes. The conference is expected to result in an agreed roadmap for converting global and regional commitments into action at the country level across sectors, with multiple stakeholders and in different settings.

The format of the conference will include high-level panel discussions, technical plenary sessions and interactive working groups. The working languages of the conference will be English and Russian, with interpretation provided.