

CALL TO ACTION: Youth, NCDs, & 2018

INTRODUCTION

The prevention, management, and treatment of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) continues to be a major development challenge across the globe with low- and middle-income countries (LMIC) shouldering a disproportionate burden of mortality – 80% of premature deaths related to NCDs occur in LMIC according to the World Health Organization (WHO). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), call for a one-third reduction in premature mortality from NCDs by 2030 through prevention and treatment, as well as through the promotion of mental health and well-being. To reach the SDG target, the global community needs to address NCDs across individual, community, organisational, and policy levels.

The next major milestone in the NCD agenda is the United Nations High-Level Meeting (UN HLM) on NCDs, scheduled for September 2018. Member states, civil society, and others will conduct a comprehensive review of progress made in the prevention and control of NCDs at the national and global levels. Securing a role for young people as advocates in this review, and ensuring they are included in subsequent priority-setting agendas, is a key step.

The presented *Call to Action: Youth, NCDs, & 2018* was developed, reviewed, and endorsed during the Global NCD Alliance Forum 2017 as a time-bound and measurable agenda for next generation NCD leaders in the lead up to the UN HLM. The priorities and activities reflect key areas for action by and for young people, with the support of civil society and government.

ROLE OF YOUTH

Throughout the development of the 2030 Agenda and related health frameworks, young people have been at the forefront in advocating for priorities to improve health and wellbeing. Our voices put pressure on decision-makers to recognise and include issues that are often side-lined, particularly related to NCDs.

We have developed grassroots campaigns on the prevention and management of NCDs and advocated for policy-level changes. Many of us are researchers helping to generate evidence being used to support these changes. As young people, we bring unique experiences and perspectives to health agendas and have a right to negotiate the future health of the communities in which we live. Ahead of next year's HLM, advocates must ensure that the priorities of young people are heard and acted upon at every level and that governments are held accountable to their NCD commitments.

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PRIORITIES

The global NCD agenda is expansive and only achievable with extensive collaboration across an array of stakeholders. While some stakeholders will take a leadership role and others a supportive one, the position of youth advocates is essential. The priorities discussed and adopted at the 2017 Global NCD Alliance Forum will require strong leadership by youth advocates with the backing of governments, civil society, families, communities, patients, and others.

- PRIORITY 1:** Ensure universal and equitable access to high-quality, affordable, age-appropriate health care
- PRIORITY 2:** Scale up financing and resources for prevention, management, and treatment of NCDs across the life-course
- PRIORITY 3:** Raise awareness of children, adolescents, and young people, and sensitise government officials about the risk factors, prevalence, and impact of NCDs

ACTION ITEMS

Advocacy for the prevention and control of NCDs needs substantial input from youth as drivers of the next generation of innovative solutions and action for health. In preparation for the UN HLM, local and global civil society organisations will engage in actions to drive advocacy agendas. The steps below, if implemented between now and 2018 will ensure adequate country and regional commitments in the high-level meeting:

- Deliver *youth-generated messages* on NCD awareness and advocacy priorities via social media, blogs, and other communication channels ahead of and during significant WHO/UN/Member State negotiations
- Create and disseminate *evidence-based policy resources* advocating for the inclusion of young people in health agendas and policy-making processes
- Develop *relationships with key government officials* to advocate for (1) the highest possible level of country representation; and (2) youth inclusion in national delegation at the UN High Level Meeting on NCDs
- Disseminate *simple, targeted messages* mobilising NCD financing and resources, ahead of the Global Conference on Financing NCDs, hosted by Denmark and WHO, to encourage more young people to advocate for funding for NCD prevention and control

Measuring progress is essential to ensuring these steps achieve their intended results. We commit to monitoring delivery against these actions, as well as celebrating and learning from successes, and identifying further opportunities to sustain momentum towards next year's meeting.

ENDORSEMENTS

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