



WHO European Ministerial Conference on the Prevention and Control Noncommunicable Diseases in the Context of Health 2020

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Ashgabat Declaration on the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases in the Context of Health 2020

We, the Ministers of Health and representatives of the Member States of the World Health Organization in the European region, together with the WHO Regional Director for Europe and health experts and representatives of civil society and intergovernmental organisations, have gathered in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, on 3rd and 4th December 2013 to face the challenges posed by the burden and threat of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs).

Building on decades of progress in our Region, we stride forward as members of a global movement, and reaffirm our commitment to existing global, European, and national frameworks to address NCDs. We note the very strong scientific evidence that most major NCDs that threaten wellbeing in our countries are to a great extent preventable diseases linked to a set of four common risk factors, and remain preventable till very late in life.

In recent years, public health has had a renaissance in the European Region. Health 2020, a framework for national health policy, has been developed and adopted, and multiple joint efforts to coordinate public health, health systems, and traditional approaches to the prevention and control of NCDs have been put in place. Health 2020 has established a consensus on the importance of addressing social determinants of health and equity, promoting shared governance, adopting a life-course approach, strengthening health systems, working with communities, and developing targets as means to improving health for all.

We now commit to the following policy actions aligned to the objectives of Health 2020, to improve health for all, to reduce health inequalities, and to strengthen leadership and participatory governance for NCDs.

Acting across the Whole of Government

We have examined the deep connections between NCDs and development, and the potential for achieving rapid results from effective collaboration across sectors. We recognise the importance of regional action and cooperation in accelerating national action to respond to NCDs.

- We confirm our commitment to raise the priority to reduce the burden of NCDs as a means of enhancing human, social and economic development across the whole of government as well as in post-2015 development goals.
- By 2016, we will have developed and adopted national targets (due consideration being given to options appropriate to different national contexts) that are aligned with global and regional mandates.

Envisioning a Tobacco Free Europe

We have reviewed progress in the ten years since the adoption of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. We conclude that Europe faces deepening inequalities in tobacco use between and

within countries. Some countries have achieved historic lows in the prevalence of tobacco use, yet Europe as a whole has the highest prevalence of smoking globally.

- Looking forward, we confirm our commitment to accelerate our efforts to achieve full implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control throughout the Region and for countries not yet party to the treaty, we will continue to advocate for ratification. We declare the urgency of achieving a high level of ratification for the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products across Europe.
- We share a vision of a Tobacco Free Europe by 2040 and will work together to develop by 2015 a roadmap to make this vision a reality.

Accelerating National Action

We have assessed the capacity of European countries to respond to NCDs and to develop people-centred health systems within national health policies inspired by Health 2020.

- We will strengthen our national information systems to better monitor NCD outcomes, risk factors, the underlying social determinants, and priority interventions guided by the Global Monitoring Framework and the Health 2020 indicators.
- We recognise the added value of people-centred health systems adapted to NCDs and related chronic conditions. We will ensure a balanced and equitable investment in public health capacity, health promotion, disease prevention, and care, and particularly so in the face of financial constraints.