

WESTERN PACIFIC REGIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR NONCOMMUNICABLE DISEASES



A Region free of avoidable NCD deaths and disability

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KEY MESSAGE

NONCOMMUNICABLE DISEASES (NCD) are a critical health and development issue for the Western Pacific Region. Government leadership and political commitment are essential to coordinate the necessary multisectoral response to the regional NCD burden. Cost-effective interventions exist and need to be prioritized for scaling up in countries. To achieve this, health systems need to strengthen prevention and to ensure NCD control is integrated into primary health care, using the Chronic Care model. Resources for noncommunicable diseases need to be enhanced and sustained to achieve measurable improvements in the health of the Region's people.





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FOREWORD

Chronic diseases, mainly cardiovascular diseases, cancers, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases, have overtaken communicable diseases as the leading health burden in the Western Pacific Region. Up to 80% of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and over a third of cancers could be prevented by eliminating shared risk factors, mainly tobacco use, unhealthy diet, physical inactivity and the harmful use of alcohol.

WHO has proposed a global goal for the prevention and control of chronic noncommunicable diseases that calls for an additional 2% reduction in chronic disease death rates every year from 2005 to 2015. The goal focuses on an achievable level of prevention that may be targeted for individual countries depending on the current state of the epidemic. An additional 2% reduction in chronic disease deaths every year over the next 10 years would mean 36 million lives saved worldwide by 2015. Close to 10 million of these lives would be saved in the Western Pacific.

Member States and other partners in the Western Pacific Region recognized the urgent need to stem the overwhelming health and economic burden from noncommunicable diseases (NCDs). Various action plans related to NCD prevention and control were developed over successive meetings in the Region, sharing a focus on prevention and health promotion through healthy policies, environments and lifestyles.

The Western Pacific Regional Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases, adopted at the fifty-ninth session of the Regional Committee for the Western Pacific in Manila in September 2008, is aligned with the global action plan for the WHO global NCD strategy. The focus of the action plan is on practical, cost-effective and evidence-based interventions that Member States can adopt to achieve a reduction in NCD risk-factor prevalence and NCD mortality and morbidity. The key principles on which the plan was developed were “people-centred approach; culturally relevant; focused on reducing inequities; encompassing the entire care continuum; involving the whole of society; integral to health systems strengthening; consistent with the global action plan, and supportive of existing, related regional strategies and action plans, flexible, using a phased approach”.

The action plan emphasizes on the need for a whole-of-government approach required for addressing NCD risk factors. The action plan provides a step-by-step approach for the development of a comprehensive and integrated national plan to prevent and control noncommunicable diseases. This action plan will help Member States enhance resources for NCD prevention and control and to maximize the investments in this area.

WHO remains committed to working closely with its partners to apply the actions contained in the Regional Action Plan to reduce morbidity and mortality from noncommunicable diseases through a people-centred approach.



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Regional Director

1 INTRODUCTION

NONCOMMUNICABLE DISEASES (NCD) represent a major public health threat in the Western Pacific Region. Currently, about 26 500 people die every day from noncommunicable diseases in the Region, with over 20 000 of these deaths occurring in the Region's developing countries.¹ Close to half of NCD deaths occur in individuals under the age of 70.² Already, noncommunicable diseases, notably cardiovascular disease (coronary heart disease and cerebrovascular disease), diabetes, cancer, and chronic pulmonary diseases, account for almost 8 out of every 10 deaths in the Western Pacific Region³—and the situation is expected to worsen in countries and areas in economic transition if urgent measures are not taken.

Ironically, most risk factors for these diseases (e.g. tobacco use, unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, harmful use of alcohol, and indoor and outdoor air pollution) are preventable. The evidence base for effective interventions is growing. Yet, the prevalence of these risk factors in the Western Pacific Region remains unacceptably high, and in many countries continues to increase.

WHO's global strategy for the prevention and control of chronic noncommunicable diseases was endorsed by the World Health Assembly in 2000 (resolution WHA53.17). Various strategies, frameworks and action plans addressing diverse NCD risk factors were developed from 2000 to 2007, including the international WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) and the Global Strategy for Diet, Physical Activity and Health (DPAS), which provided the basis for a global action plan for the global strategy. At the recently concluded Sixty-first World Health Assembly, in resolution WHA61.14,



Member States endorsed the Action Plan for the Global Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases. The Global Strategy and Action Plan represent the culmination of diverse efforts by WHO and its Member States to definitively address, in solidarity, the challenge of chronic diseases.

Recognizing that chronic diseases are the major contributor to preventable death and disability in the Western Pacific Region, Member States have been working collaboratively to determine how best to respond to the regional burden of noncommunicable diseases. This document contains a Regional Action Plan to operationalize the Global Action Plan for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases, envisioning “a Region free of avoidable NCD deaths and disability”.

