



Greetings,

The **South African Federation for Mental Health** ([www.safmh.org](http://www.safmh.org)) and the **Movement for Global Mental Health** ([www.globalmentalhealth.org](http://www.globalmentalhealth.org)), in conjunction with the World Health Organization's Civil Society Working Group on NCDs, is requesting your support to raise awareness about the increasing prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), which are impacted by environmental factors, unhealthy commercial products, and poverty. NCDs are now a global health issue that threatens the health and well-being of all people, young and old. **Forty million deaths** occur each year due to these NCDs, and this includes **1.2 million youth** under 20 years of age. Of those who survive with NCDs, many are unable to work, a fact that is crippling the economies of many low and middle income countries. We need **action now**, to promote healthy options at the community, national, and global levels.

NCDs are complex, and we require a unified approach, informed by our collective concern that NCDs will adversely impact everyone. We support an inclusive concept about NCDs. **No one should be left behind!** We support a life course approach, integrated into all aspects of health and beyond and consider all chronic illnesses within the broad category of NCDs. This includes chronic illnesses of childhood like asthma and rheumatic heart disease, and diseases common in adulthood such as type 2 diabetes, cancer, and heart disease. Older adults will face additional health concerns such as dementia and Alzheimer's disease. All are at risk for **depression and mental, neurological and substance use disorders**; all people will benefit from a strong response to these health issues that have become a common experience around the world.

A global health solution requires individual actions by civil society, philanthropy, and the business community, to demonstrate our **commitment to improve the health and wellbeing of all people**. Commercial determinants of health are becoming more prevalent in all countries, and marketing of unhealthy products challenge our **right to health as a basic human right**.

We ask that you support feasible, sustainable interventions consistent with the recommendations of the World Health Organization. This will be the best way to

achieve the **Sustainable Development Goals**, one community at a time, one country at a time.

**Here are some suggested ways we can make a difference:**

1. Demonstrate the role civil society can play in holding governments accountable to their obligations. Urge government leaders to commit to actions that will prevent NCDs, through attention to health and safety for all people, including mental health. We request you contact your national delegation to the United Nations, to ensure participation of Heads of Government in the U.N. High Level Meetings prior to the 2018 UN General Assembly. Please specify that basic, integrated health systems through Universal Health Coverage will keep people healthy, for a healthy community and a healthy work force.
2. Educate children and families about NCDs prevention through school-based education, healthy meals in schools, and through routine physical activity for all. This reduces childhood obesity, and it promotes good physical and mental health.
3. Eliminate environmental toxins such as air pollution and other contaminants. This includes the toxic effects of tobacco smoke and second-hand smoke. The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control must be fully implemented to reduce physical and environmental threats.
4. Consider the needs of special populations in your community including older citizens, marginalized populations, and people living with NCDs and disabilities. An inclusive health plan is a successful health plan.
5. Collaborate with leaders to develop a sustainable financial plan to address NCDs prevention and control focusing on feasible and practical solutions, consistent with the needs of all people. Funding may be derived from additional revenues that include support of the private and the public sectors. Additional funding will raise the political priority of NCDs prevention and control.
6. Involve persons living with NCDs and youth in meaningful decision-making processes that affect their lives. Advance the advocacy agenda of people living with NCDs through an inclusive process to ensure equitable access to treatments and universal health coverage. Youth have shown to be effective change agents when there is ownership of issues and they are empowered with appropriate skills to lead such campaigns.
7. Palliative care and pain relief are vital components for the continuum of care for people living with NCDs. We support access to essential medications for all people, including equitable access to palliative care and pain relief.

We greatly appreciate your careful consideration of these seven action steps to sustain healthy communities, through the prevention and control of NCDs. **Healthy people means healthy economies**, and we all deserve the chance for positive health and well-being. We urge your cooperation, to advocate for and promote good health in all policies, in the private sector and the public sector. We need careful reflection and positive action now and into the future.

Please contact your United Nations delegation and please share these messages now with the Heads of your nation's government, to promote comprehensive care for all who are living with or at risk for NCDs. We kindly ask that you join our campaign indicating we have had "**Enough NCDs**" and we intend to "**Beat NCDs**". Please use this link <https://goo.gl/forms/GJEhjp6MdiP6NU8z2> to register your support for our campaign. We will conduct several campaigns leading up to the UNHLM to highlight the issues around NCDs prevention and control. We kindly request your support in endorsing those campaigns and to help us disseminate messages that underscore the need for an urgent multi-sectoral action on NCD prevention and control at country level and a greater coordination at global level to increase funding towards NCD prevention and control and to recognize and support civil society action.

We appreciate your support, and we hope to continue to work together with you as part of our global campaign for the prevention and control of NCDs.

Sincerely,



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**Ms Charlene Sunkel**

Program Manager: ***SA Federation for Mental Health***

Principal Coordinator: ***Movement for Global Mental Health***

*On behalf of*

**WHO Civil Society Working Group on the third High-level Meeting of the UN General Assembly on NCDs**



**TOGETHER  
LET'S BEAT NCDs**

*Preparing for the third UN High-level Meeting on NCDs, 2018*

Some key social media messages you could use in support of the “**Enough NCDs**” and “**Beat NCDs**” campaign:

- Countries are ill-prepared for the **#NCDs**-related illness, death and disability anticipated between now and 2030. 2018 is a tipping point for action. **#beatNCDs #enoughNCDs**
- **#NCDs**: It’s not only **#timetodeliver**, delivery is overdue. **#beatNCDs #enoughNCDs**
- Most deaths, and premature deaths, from **#NCDs** occur in **#LMICs** – all governments need to act now to leave no-one behind, **#beatNCDs** & ensure **#HealthForAll #enoughNCDs**
- **#NCDs**: millions of lives are needlessly lost, economies are hemorrhaging. To get back on track & save lives & money, business as usual is not an option. **#beatNCDs #enoughNCDs**
- To achieve **#SDG3** - key elements of scaling up a comprehensive & integrated response to **#NCDs** (3.4): Promotion, Prevention, Treatment, Rehabilitation, and Palliation. **#enoughNCDs #beatNCDs**
- Beyond the alarming statistic are the stories - **#NCDvoices** provide the imperative for action. These stories must be told and must be listened to. **#beatNCDs #enoughNCDs #HLM3**
- **#NCDs** affect everyone and cut across development, including rights, poverty, gender, race and environment, requiring a coherent multisectoral response. For truly sustainable development, we must work beyond the health sector. We are all in this together **#beatNCDs #enoughNCDs #SDGs**
- People living with, at risk of and affected by **#NCDs**, young people, and civil society are the heart of the NCD response and should be front and center in both advocacy and demanding people first action. **#beatNCDs #enoughNCDs #NCDvoices**
- Equitable access to quality, affordable, timely diagnosis, treatment and care for NCDs must be at the forefront of health systems, with many NCDs chronic conditions requiring regular and life-long attention. **#beatNCDs #enoughNCDs #HealthForAll**