

Turning resolutions into results: leveraging the fourth United Nations High-Level Meeting to accelerate regional progress on noncommunicable diseases in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

Date: 1 October 2025

Time: 11:00–12:30

Duration: 90 minutes

Modality: Virtual (calendar invitation will be sent by email)

Objectives of the event

On 1 October 2025, a virtual event will be held on progress in implementing two Regional Committee resolutions to step up action on noncommunicable diseases (NCDs): resolution [EM/RC68/R.5](#) on addressing diabetes as a public health challenge and resolution [EM/RC70/R.2](#) on addressing NCDs in emergencies in the Eastern Mediterranean Region.

The objectives of the event are to:

- Leverage the renewed vision of the political declaration of the fourth high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases and the promotion of mental health and well-being and its relevance to the regional NCD agenda.
- Present the second progress report on implementing the regional framework for action on diabetes and the first progress report on implementing the framework for action on NCDs in emergencies, highlighting key achievements, challenges and lessons learned.
- Identify and prioritize strategic actions to accelerate progress, informed by challenges and recommendations from the two progress reports and the 2025 political declaration on NCDs.
- Facilitate the exchange of country experiences in implementing WHO technical packages, including HEARTS and the Package of Essential Noncommunicable Disease Interventions (PEN).

Background

Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), including diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, cancers and chronic lung diseases, are the leading cause of premature mortality globally and account for 66% of all deaths in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region.¹ Diabetes alone affects nearly 85 million adults (one in six people), with the Region having the highest prevalence globally (17.6%) and the highest proportion of diabetes-

¹ Assessing national capacity for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases. Report of the 2021 country capacity survey in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. Cairo: WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean; 2024. Licence: CC BYNC-SA 3.0 IGO.

related deaths among working-age individuals (under 60 years) (21.6%).² Nearly one third of diabetes cases remain undiagnosed, highlighting significant gaps in detection and care.³

Meanwhile, the Region is home to 38% of the world's population in need of humanitarian assistance, making it particularly vulnerable to disruptions in health systems.⁴ Nearly half the 22 countries or territories in the Region are on the World Bank's list of fragile and conflict-affected situations, with the largest number of forcibly displaced people globally.^{4,5} Emergencies, conflicts and displacement exacerbate the burden of NCDs by limiting access to care, decimating infrastructure and causing supply chain disruptions.

To address these challenges, Member States in the Region endorsed two regional frameworks:

- the [regional framework for action on diabetes prevention and control](#) in 2021; and
- the [regional framework for action on NCDs in emergencies](#) in 2023.

In September 2025, Heads of State are set to update their vision to act on NCDs through the fourth UN political declaration of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of NCDs and the promotion of mental health and well-being. With an overall theme of equity and integration, the political declaration identifies five areas of commitments to transform lives and livelihoods, prioritizing people in conflicts and humanitarian settings.

Expected outcomes

- Identify linkages between the political declaration on NCDs and regional progress reports to develop effective and contextually appropriate implementation strategies.
- A summary report including a prioritized list of actions agreed upon by WHO, Member State representatives and other stakeholders.

² Middle East and North Africa. Brussels: International Diabetes Federation; 2025 (<https://diabetesatlas.org/data-by-location/region/middle-east-and-north-africa>).

³ World Diabetes Day 2024 [website]. Cairo: WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean; 2024 (<https://www.emro.who.int/media/news/world-diabetes-day-2024.html>, accessed 17 March 2025).

⁴ Refugee data finder [website]. Geneva: UNHCR; 2023 (<https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics>).

⁵ Classification of fragile and conflict-affected situations [website]. Washington, DC: The World Bank; 2025 (<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/brief/classification-of-fragile-and-conflict-affected-situations>).