

DEPARTMENT OF NONCOMMUNICABLE DISEASES AND MENTAL HEALTH



*Our goal is to build a
better, healthier future
for people in the Region*



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A MESSAGE FROM THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR



Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari

WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean

Noncommunicable diseases, mental, neurological and substance use disorders are affecting millions of people in WHO's Eastern Mediterranean Region. By promoting mental health and well-being, and tackling major risk factors such as tobacco and alcohol use, unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, hypertension, obesity and air pollution, we can prevent premature death, avoid disability and treat and control many of these conditions.

The WHO Department of Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health works closely with a range of key partners, including government, civil society, academia and the private sector, to respond to this growing epidemic and help countries deliver on their commitments to reduce premature death and disability from noncommunicable diseases, and promote mental health and well-being by 2030. With strong political commitment from world leaders and the roadmaps, tools and guidance we have available to us, there is now a real opportunity to turn the tide and build a better, healthier future for everyone by working even harder to deliver on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

What we do

The Department of Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health is responsible for providing technical advice and programmatic support to countries¹ of the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region, with the common goal of promoting health and reducing premature death and disability from noncommunicable diseases, mental health and substance use disorders.

These conditions are on the rise. They not only result in premature death and disability but also hinder development, compromise security and impose an enormous economic, social and emotional burden on health and social systems. The rise in these conditions is being driven by certain factors, including tobacco use, physical inactivity, unhealthy diets, obesity, harmful use of alcohol, narcotic drug use, air pollution, humanitarian emergencies and political and socioeconomic transitions.

The Department is working with countries and key partners to:

- prevent these conditions, by addressing related risk factors;
- manage these conditions, through lifestyle measures and treatment; and
- monitor these conditions, through surveillance of risk factors and assessment of health systems.

The goal is to build a better, healthier future for people in the Region – which is essential for improving social, human and material capital in order to achieve optimum development in every country.

¹ The WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region comprises Afghanistan, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, occupied Palestinian territory, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

The Department consists of several technical units focused on providing countries with the tools and guidance to **prevent, manage and monitor** noncommunicable diseases, mental, neurological and substance use disorders in order to reduce the avoidable burden of death and disability from these conditions. Each unit works in close collaboration with WHO headquarters and country offices, ministries of health, and national and international partners to:

- **advocate** for higher levels of political commitment to give priority to these conditions in national, political and development agendas.
- **counter** the stigma and discrimination associated with these conditions in general, and with mental and substance use disorders in particular.
- **empower** civil society, including user and family associations.
- **provide** guidance on developing a national surveillance scheme to: monitor exposure to risk factors and determinants; monitor outcomes in terms of disease and death; and assess health system capacity and response, which also includes national capacity to prevent these conditions.
- **provide** guidance on developing multisectoral action plans and setting national targets.
- **provide** guidance on implementing “best buys” to reduce the root causes for these conditions, namely tobacco use, physical inactivity, unhealthy diets, obesity, harmful use of alcohol, narcotic drug use and air pollution.
- **provide** innovative, evidence-based solutions to new and emerging issues.
- **provide** technical support in developing, implementing and monitoring evidence-informed and ethical policies, strategies and legislation across multiple sectors.
- **support** the development of sound food and nutrition policies and promote healthy nutrition knowledge and practices in both normal and complex emergency situations.
- **scale** up cost-effective, multisectoral interventions and programmes to promote mental and physical wellbeing and prevent these conditions.
- **strengthen** health systems to address these conditions, prioritizing cost-effective interventions, with a focus on strengthening integration of these conditions in primary health care, both in stable and emergency settings.
- **strengthen** health and social care systems to provide inclusive, integrated and human rights oriented care.
- **strengthen** the capacity of countries to establish and strengthen monitoring and surveillance systems, utilize operational research for improved planning, delivery and evaluation of policies, legislation and services.
- **support** and strengthen the capacity of countries to provide mental health and psychosocial support in emergencies in a timely and effective manner.

The health toll

62%

Noncommunicable diseases

Over 62% of deaths in the Region are caused by noncommunicable diseases, with more than 2.5 million lives lost to these conditions every year. It is estimated that up to half these deaths occur prematurely (under the age of 70) in some countries. There is an alarming increase in the prevalence of these conditions. One person in every five is likely to die from one of the four main noncommunicable diseases (heart disease, cancer, diabetes and chronic lung disease) between the ages of 30 and 70.

60%

Mental health and substance use

The prevalence of mental disorders, specifically depressive illness and anxiety disorders, is high in countries of the Region and is almost wholly accounted for by the prevailing emergency situations. The prevalence of drug use in some countries is much higher than the global average. Treatment rates for people with mental and substance use disorders are low, with treatment gaps of more than 35–50% of individuals with serious disorders in developed countries and 76–85% of individuals with serious disorders in less developed countries. Worldwide, around 60% of suicide deaths can be attributed to mental and substance use disorders.

Implementing regional roadmaps

To address the devastating social, economic and public health impact of noncommunicable diseases, mental health and substance use disorders, the Department has developed five regional frameworks for action. The purpose of these frameworks is to prevent, control, and scale up action on: noncommunicable diseases; mental, neurological and substance use disorders; cancers; obesity; and tobacco. These frameworks capture global commitments made by countries to prevent premature death and disability caused by these conditions. Each framework is divided into various components. Each component has a set of strategic interventions and indicators to measure progress made by countries.

The frameworks are milestones, as they provide countries with specific, evidence-based progress measures. All the measures included in the frameworks are high-impact, evidence-based, cost-effective and affordable, and can be implemented by all countries irrespective of income. Together with partners, WHO is working to support the implementation of these frameworks, which will have a high impact on improving the health of populations, and will play a major part in helping countries meet their priorities under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

By 2030...

Reduce premature deaths from noncommunicable diseases by one-third, through prevention and treatment and promoting mental health and well-being.

Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance use, including narcotic drug use and harmful use of alcohol.

The Sustainable Development Goals were adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015, and look to 2030.



Regional framework for action on prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases

Endorsed by countries in 2012.

Uses four areas to assess progress made by countries in the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases: governance; prevention and reduction of risk factors; surveillance, monitoring and evaluation; and health care.



Regional framework for action on mental health and substance use

Endorsed by countries in 2015.

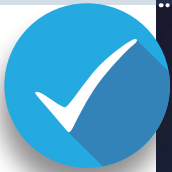
Uses four areas to assess the progress made by countries in scaling up action on mental health and substance use: governance; health care; promotion and prevention; and surveillance, monitoring and research.



Regional framework for action on cancer prevention and control

Endorsed by countries in 2017.

Uses six areas to assess the progress made by countries in the prevention and control of cancers: governance; prevention; early detection; treatment; palliative care; and surveillance and research.



Regional framework for action on obesity prevention

Endorsed by countries in 2018.

Uses four areas to assess the progress made by countries in the prevention and control of overweight and obesity: regulatory action; prevention; obesity management and treatment; and surveillance.



Regional framework for action on tobacco control

Endorsed by countries in 2018.

Uses four areas to assess the progress made by countries in the prevention and control of tobacco use and exposure to its smoke: governance and political commitment; demand-side measures; supply-side measures; and surveillance, monitoring and research.

Our partners

We work together with different partners to promote health and reduce premature death and disability from noncommunicable diseases, mental health and substance use disorders. We collaborate across government and civil society, as well as other sectors beyond health to improve the health and well-being of all people in the Region.

We are working with some of the best people, organizations and institutions in the Region and around the globe to tackle noncommunicable diseases, mental health and substance use disorders. Together, we are working to make a real difference to the lives of millions, empowering them through information and providing them with steps they can take to protect themselves and those around them from the debilitating and deadly effects of noncommunicable diseases, mental health and substance use disorders.

Like us, all our partners have a real desire and passion to improve the health and well-being of millions of people in the Region, by supporting countries in implementing the regional frameworks for action. Our partners include:

- ministries of health
- international health agencies
- communities
- government
- nongovernmental organizations
- philanthropic foundations
- civil society
- national health leaders
- health workers
- private sector entities
- academia.



Our endgame

At the United Nations Summit in 2015, countries around the world pledged to reach the Sustainable Development Goals which include:

- reducing premature death from noncommunicable diseases by 30% by 2030, through prevention and treatment and promoting mental health and well-being.
- strengthening the prevention and treatment of substance use, including narcotic drug use and harmful use of alcohol.

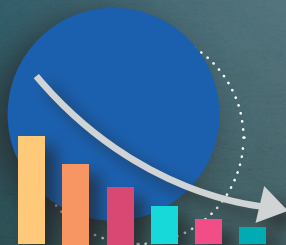
With this type of political commitment, in addition to the available roadmaps, tools and guidance, we have a real opportunity to support countries in making progress towards their goals. We are determined to help countries deliver on their commitments, and to continue working with partners to improve the health and well-being of millions of people in the Region.



By 2030...

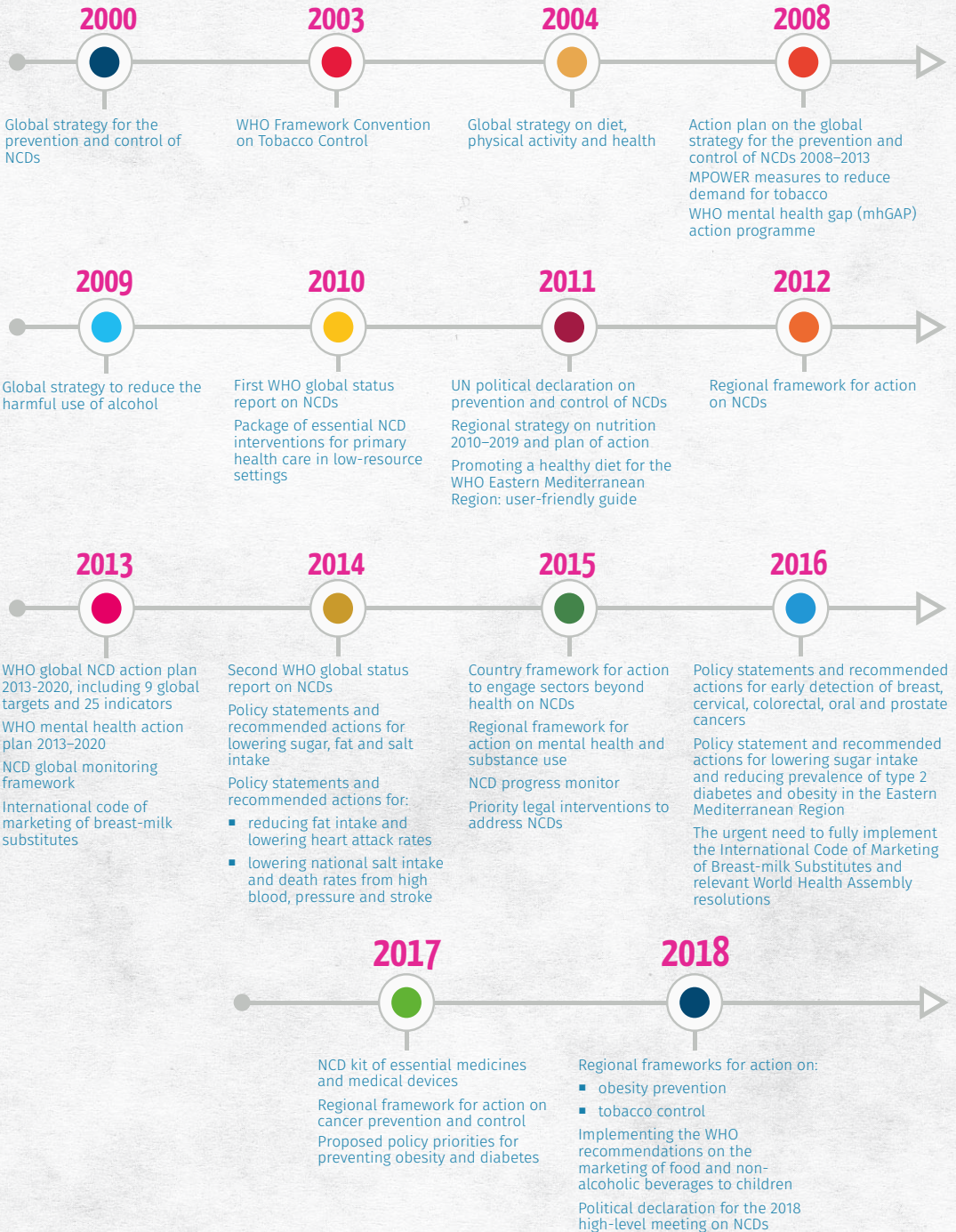
Reduce deaths from noncommunicable diseases, mental health and substance use disorders

#beatNCDs



Our key tools

We provide countries with evidence-based tools, to support them in making progress towards their 2030 goal of reducing premature death from noncommunicable diseases, mental health and substance use disorders. These tools include action plans, strategies, conventions, policy statements, frameworks and interventions. Here are some of our key tools.





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