

WHO calls for urgent action against NCDs

Collectively, cancer, diabetes, lung and heart diseases kill 41-million people annually, accounting for 71% of all deaths globally, 15 million of which occur between the ages of 30 and 70 years, says a World Health Organisation (WHO) report.



Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO director-general

Therefore, the World Health Organisation (WHO) Independent High-level Commission on Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs) has called for urgent action to address chronic diseases and mental health disorders. It demands high-level political commitment and the immediate scaling up of actions to address the epidemic of NCDs, the world's leading causes of death and ill health.

The commission makes six recommendations in its report:

1. Heads of state and government should take responsibility for the NCD agenda, rather than delegating it to ministers of health alone, as it requires collaboration and cooperation across many sectors.
2. Governments should identify and implement a specific set of priorities within the overall NCD and mental health agenda, based on public health needs.
3. Governments should reorient health systems to include NCDs prevention and control and mental health services in their universal health coverage policies and plans.
4. Governments should increase effective regulation, appropriate engagement with the private sector, academia, civil society, and communities.
5. Governments and the international community should develop a new economic paradigm for funding actions on NCDs and mental health.
6. Governments need to strengthen accountability to their citizens for action on NCDs and simplify existing international accountability mechanisms.

Fulfilling the promise of universal health coverage, to ensure all people everywhere can access quality health services without suffering financial hardship, is one of WHO's top priorities. The Commission's report will help guide countries as they make progress toward health for all and tackle both NCDs and infectious killers.

"WHO was founded 70 years ago on the conviction that health is a human right to be enjoyed by all people, and not a privilege for the few," WHO Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. "The recommendations of this report are an important step towards realising that right by preventing the suffering and death caused by noncommunicable diseases."

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