

Statement on Agenda Item 3.1 – Draft Thirteenth General Programme of Work

Honourable chair, distinguished delegates. The World Heart Federation welcomes the updated draft of the 13th General Programme of Work (or ‘GPW’).

We commend the document’s emphasis on working in partnership, such as through the implementation of the framework for engagement with non-State actors (FENSA) – a crucial component for a multisectoral NCD response – while preserving WHO’s integrity by speaking out against practices and products harmful to health.

We further commend the inclusion of NCDs as a key platform under the Strategic Priority ‘Healthier Populations’, and the emphasis placed on reducing NCD and cardiovascular disease (CVD) risk factors such as tobacco and alcohol use, unhealthy diet and physical inactivity, among others.

We support this strong emphasis on a population-based prevention approach, however we urge WHO and its Member States not to overlook equitable access to safe and affordable NCD treatments.

Many people living with NCDs such as CVD suffer from poor access to medicines, even though generic essential CVD drugs such as aspirin, statins, beta-blockers, and ACE-inhibitors, are listed as feasible, cost-effective interventions in the WHO PEN Package,¹ demonstrating value for money for WHO and Member States.

The inequity in access to services is referenced by the Director-General’s report on Item 3.6, which highlights that up to 90% of the population in developing countries purchase medicines through out-of-pocket payments, and that this financial burden will rise due to the increasing prevalence of NCDs.²

It is the right of people to access care, and is vital for the attainment of the highest possible standard of health, as emphasized in goal 3 of the SDGs. We therefore suggest changing the title of Platform 2 to *‘Accelerating the comprehensive management and prevention of noncommunicable diseases and promoting mental health’*. We believe this wording would better align with the fourth outcome of WHO’s new impact framework, that is: *‘NCDs prevented, treated, managed, and their risk factors controlled, and mental health prioritized and improved’*.

Thank you for your attention.

¹ http://www.who.int/nmh/publications/essential_ncd_interventions_lr_settings.pdf

² http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB142/B142_13-en.pdf