

WMA, ICN, FDI and FIP comments to the first draft of zero outcome document of the HLM on NCDs – version 13 May 2025

General Comments

Positive Elements:

- ï We commend the **clarity and specificity of the commitments and targets**, particularly those related to key risk factors. This makes the Zero Draft more actionable than the 2018 Outcome Document.
- ï The structure and focus of the commitments ensure that the document remains implementable and relevant, without overwhelming national systems with unattainable goals.
- ï We strongly support the consistent emphasis on strengthening **primary health care** as the foundation and core part of integrated and comprehensive people-centred health care systems.
- ï The explicit integration of **person-centred care** principles and the reaffirmation of **universal health coverage** to protect the most vulnerable populations are welcomed and strongly aligned with WMA values.

Concerns:

- ï The health systems strengthening elements in the Zero Draft appear to focus too heavily on single-disease vertical interventions related to specific NCDs and their risk factors. This reinforces a **siloed approach**, which is contrary to the integrated, sustainable models needed in resilient health systems and especially Universal Health Coverage.
- ï The document would benefit from greater emphasis on a **holistic health systems and health workforce approach**, capable of adapting to diverse and emerging challenges—including pandemics, climate-related health emergencies, and aging populations—rather than prioritizing narrowly defined interventions.
- ï The timelines for preventive actions are without ambition. Measures that could be introduced immediately are placed on an excessive timelines. A method that has proven to be without great success in the past.

Comments on Health Workforce (paragraph 37 and related sections)

The WMA underscores that a **resilient and well-supported health workforce** is fundamental to delivering on the commitments in this Declaration. We recommend that the Zero Draft be strengthened in the following ways:

- **Investment** in a qualified health workforce remains among the most underdeveloped components of health service development in many countries. The declaration should acknowledge this critical gap and call for national-level health workforce strategies.
- The **WHO estimates a global shortage of 10 to 18 million health workers by 2030**, which presents a serious threat to health systems and must be directly addressed in the political declaration.
- **All countries must take decisive action** to protect, safeguard, expand and optimize the health and care workforce to ensure system functionality and resilience.
- We call for stronger language on the **need to protect and invest in the workforce**, including physical and mental well-being, occupational safety, and working conditions.
- Strengthening national capacities requires robust investment in the **training, development, recruitment and retention** of a competent, skilled, and adequately equipped health workforce.
- A well-supported health workforce not only improves service delivery, but also drives **broader socio-economic benefits**, including poverty reduction and reduced inequality through decent employment.

Recommended Addition to Paragraph 37 (in bold new edits):

We support the intent of paragraph 37, and recommend the following revision:

“Increase the number, capacity, retention, and competencies of trained health care workers to implement integrated primary care services for prevention, screening, diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation and palliative care for people living with one or several noncommunicable diseases and mental health conditions, **while improving working conditions and ensuring workplace safety, providing fair remuneration, and promoting continued education and life-long learning to strengthen workforce sustainability and performance.**”

Recommended Revision to Related Target (in bold new edits):

We also recommend amending the related health system target to include sufficient staffing:

“At least 80% of public primary health care facilities in all countries have uninterrupted availability of at least 80% of World Health Organization-recommended essential medicines and basic technologies for noncommunicable diseases and mental health conditions at ^affordable prices, **and are staffed with a sufficient number of educated health care professionals to deliver integrated quality services** for prevention, screening, diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation, and palliative care by 2030.”

We appreciate the opportunity to contribute to this critical process and stand ready to support continued efforts to advance integrated, equitable, and person-centred approaches to NCDs and mental health.

About WMA

The World Medical Association (WMA) is the global federation of National Medical Associations representing the millions of physicians worldwide. Acting on behalf of patients and physicians, the WMA endeavours to achieve the highest possible standards of medical care, ethics, education and health-related human rights for all people.

<https://www.wma.net/>

About ICN

The International Council of Nurses (ICN) is a federation of over 130 national nurses associations (NNAs), representing the over 30 million nurses worldwide. Founded in 1899, ICN is the world's first and widest reaching international organisation for health professionals. Operated by nurses and leading nurses internationally, ICN works to ensure quality nursing care for all, sound health policies globally, the advancement of nursing knowledge, and the presence worldwide of a respected nursing profession and a competent and satisfied nursing workforce.

<https://www.icn.ch/>

About FDI

FDI World Dental Federation (FDI) serves as the principal representative body for more than one million dentists worldwide and has a bold vision to *lead the world to optimal oral health*.

FDI represents more than one million dentists worldwide. We work with our members to raise awareness about the importance of good oral health and its vital role in securing overall health and well-being. We are dedicated to safeguarding the health of people worldwide through the improved prevention, treatment, and control of oral diseases.

<https://www.fdiworlddental.org/>

About FIP

The International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) is the global body representing over 4 million pharmacists and pharmaceutical scientists. We work to meet the world's healthcare needs.

<https://www.fip.org/>