

## OPENING REMARKS

### **INFORMAL CONSULTATION WITH MEMBER STATES IN PREPARATION FOR EB150:**

Intersessional work being conducted by the WHO Secretariat on the 10 assignments for WHO's work for the prevention and control of NCDs and the promotion of mental health

Good morning,

Welcome and thank you for coming together at today's "Informal consultation with Member States on the ongoing intersessional work on the prevention and control of NCDs and promotion of mental health in preparation for the 150<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Board."

**[MORNING:]** My name is Naoko Yamamoto, I am the Assistant Director-General at WHO responsible for Healthier Populations, and I will be chairing the consultation this morning. My colleague Ren Minghui will be chairing the consultation this afternoon.

**[AFTERNOON:]** My name is Ren Minghui I am the Assistant Director-General at WHO responsible for Communicable and Noncommunicable Diseases, and I will be chairing the consultation this afternoon. My colleague Naoko Yamamoto chaired the consultation this morning.

**Before we proceed, let me express our appreciation for your support during the World Health Assembly in May 2021.**

Your efforts resulted in crucial resolutions on NCDs and mental health.

**You have also entrusted us with a new list of assignments** which are some of the most ambitious since the first High-level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on NCDs and Mental Health in 2011.

If we are successful in completing these new assignments, we will make WHO stronger, more agile and fit-for-purpose, and at the centre of the global health architecture in a changing global health landscape.

We have led the global health response on NCDs and mental health for many years now, provided country support, and established norms and standards to guide country actions.

But the challenge continues. **The bottom line is that, today, more than one in three lives lost to NCDs is premature and largely preventable, yet these conditions remain overwhelmingly neglected.**

The disruption of NCD and mental health services due to the COVID-19 pandemic **will lead to excess mortality. And this, in turn, comes on top of comorbidities from COVID-19 and NCDs.** We are continuing to analyse the data from countries in order to derive global estimates on these comorbidities.

**Countries' action on the NCD risk factors has also been badly affected with resources redeployed during COVID-19** resulting in slower or no progress on implementation of key actions. For example, progress on physical activity has been severely impacted in many countries during a time when its contribution to both physical and mental health has been most acutely recognised

As we develop these new assignments, we must, therefore, ensure that WHO's new work in this area is not a symbolic pledge, but will generate **a vital commitment for greater ambition from Member States.** Our collective work is crucial now more than ever.

I look forward to hearing your feedback today.

The objective of today's informal consultation is to provide Member States with an opportunity to provide information feedback on the ongoing intersessional work that is being conducted by WHO Secretariat on the prevention and control of NCDs and the promotion of mental health in preparation for the 150<sup>th</sup> session of the WHO Executive Board in January 2022.

This informal feedback is in addition to the more formal feedback you may wish to give through the ongoing web-based consultations.

The agenda for today is organized around **five** sessions of 30 minutes to collect feedback from you on specific assignments which we were requested to develop in consultation with Member States. These are:

- Global action plan on neurological conditions
- Global action plan on the harmful use of alcohol
- Global strategy on oral health
- Recommendations and targets for diabetes
- Recommendations and targets for obesity

We will also update you on the development of **two** assignments where there was no explicit mandate given to us to consult you. These are:

- NCD implementation roadmap
- Recommendations to treat people living with NCDs and to prevent their risk factors in humanitarian emergencies

And we will brief you on **one** assignment that is still under development, which is the development of a workplan for the GCM.

I would also like to introduce to you my colleagues who will be chairing each of the 30-minute sessions today:

- Devora Kestel, Director, Mental Health and Substance Use
- Bente Mikkelsen, Director, NCDs
- Francesco Branca, Director, Nutrition and Food Safety
- Svetlana Akselrod, Director, Global NCD Platform.

Thank you.