



## Note for the Record

### United Nations Thematic Working Group on Noncommunicable Diseases, Thailand

#### Introduction

The first meeting of the UN Thematic Working Group (UNTWG) on noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) was held on Friday 5 April 2019 from 2.00 PM to 4.00 PM at the UN Conference Centre in Bangkok, Thailand. The meeting was co-chaired by Ms Dierdre Boyd, UN Resident Co-ordinator for Thailand and Dr Suwannachai Wattanayingcharoenchai, Director General, Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health. The list of attendees is attached.

The impetus for establishing the UNTWG comes from the UN Interagency Task Force (UNIATF) Mission on NCDs conducted in Thailand during 28-30 August 2018 to catalyze a “whole of government” and “whole of society action” for the prevention and control of NCDs

Reducing premature NCD deaths is crucial not only for meeting the health goals of the sustainable development agenda but also for achieving many other cross-cutting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The health sector alone cannot alleviate the burden of NCDs. Action from all of government ministries and all of society is needed.

The UNTWG on NCDs is the first of its kind partnership model, comprising UN agencies, government organizations and civil society to address the serious threat posed by NCDs. In addition to following up on the recommendations of the UNIATF, the UNTWG can be a platform to discuss cross-sectoral actions to advance the NCD agenda in Thailand. Importantly, this unique partnership demonstrates the commitment of the UN system “to work as one” at country level, in supporting the government in achieving the SDGs.

#### Agenda 1: Appointment of the UN thematic group and adoption of the Terms of Reference (TORs)

##### Key discussion points

- There was a suggestion that the TORs should reference to reporting progress to national counterparts, including to the prime minister. It was explained that existing government mechanisms such as the national multisectoral NCD committee (chaired by the Health Minister) and the fourth Administration Steering and Reform Committee on Health and Social issues (chaired by the Prime Minister), will be the platforms used for reporting progress to government counterparts.
- While the head of each participating UN agency will be listed in the membership of the UNTWG, any representative from an agency can attend meetings, as per delegation by the head.

##### Decisions:

- The UN thematic working group on NCDs, with membership of UN agencies, government organizations and civil society, was appointed for a period of two years.
- The Terms of Reference of the UN thematic group on NCDs were endorsed.

**Actions points:** None

## **Agenda 2. Framework for reviewing progress in implementing recommendations of the UN Inter Agency Task Force (UNIATF) Mission**

### **Key observations/discussion points**

- The “expected outcome” or the “goal post” for each recommendation should be defined. While the recommendations made by the UNAITF cannot be changed at this stage, members can agree on the expected level of progress for each recommendation over the next two years.
- The framework would be more complete with an additional column that lists UN agencies and government ministries that will be focal agencies for each recommendation.
- The framework should be completed with an updated status of implementation of each recommendation, trends, and challenges, to identify appropriate follow-up actions.
- As some recommendations have already been achieved, e.g., 3.1 on plain packaging, members may consider prioritizing recommendations, and linking up government ministries with UN agencies for necessary support.
- There were suggestions to align the UNIATF recommendations within the framework of NCD-related SDGs. It was noted that there are many existing government led committees for tracking different SDGs that include health NCD related actions.
- Possible support from UN agencies to Govt of Thailand was discussed. For example FAO could provide support on food labeling and nutrition guidelines; UNEP on improving air quality and undertaking health impact assessment; UNICEF could support implementation of milk code, early childhood development and school health related work; UNAIDS could mobilise engagement on NCDs of their large network of people living with HIV as well as civil society, and; UNDP could support greater engagement of non-health sectors.

### **Decision:**

- Adoption of the framework with an additional column listing UN, government and other focal agencies for each recommendation.

### **Action points**

- Secretariat to consult with concerned government agencies and draft “expected outcome” for each recommendation
- Secretariat to populate the framework with inputs from relevant stakeholders.
- Secretariat to link up UN agencies with corresponding government ministries to work together on specific recommendations.

## **Agenda 3. Next meeting**

- As the first meeting focused on matters related to formally setting up the UNTWG, there was a call for holding an additional (extra) meeting to discuss expected outcomes and key actions needed from the UN and other agencies.

### **Action point:**

- Secretariat to schedule and organize the next meeting after holding informal consultations with stakeholders and completing the framework.

## **Annex: List of participants**

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