



DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE

World Health Organization

Small-Island Developing States (SIDS) High Level Technical Meeting on NCDs and Mental Health 17/18 January 2023

NCDs have become the leading cause of death in most countries, resulting in 150 million premature deaths among people aged between 30 and 70 years, most living in developing countries. The global share of NCD deaths among all deaths increased from 61% in 2000 to 74% in 2019 and as a group, Small Island Developing States (SIDS) share a disproportionately high burden of this together with mental health conditions and their determinants. Mental health conditions are common in SIDS with an estimated 15.2% of the population in the Caribbean and 11.2% in the Pacific having a mental disorder¹. Suicide rates are high in SIDS, with 2 countries having the 5th and 6th highest age standardized suicide rates globally. The prevalence of risk factors for NCDs and mental health in SIDS are some of the highest in the world with tobacco use of 68% for adult males in one country and overweight rate up to 80% for adult women in another. The high burden of NCDs in SIDS predisposed the population to higher vulnerability to becoming more severely ill with COVID-19 or any outbreak.

Commercial determinants of health and trade are important drivers of NCDs in SIDS. Trade agreements and policies, through their influences on price, availability and promotion of food products, cigarettes and alcohol, have helped accelerate nutritional transition away from traditional diets, a process which 'has been a driver of high levels of obesity, food insecurity, and NCDs in SIDS countries'. The impact of climate change on health is most pronounced in developing nations, with SIDS facing an even higher level of vulnerability.

Health systems in SIDS are under-resourced, and many health services are struggling to transition to a chronic care model to reflect the changing epidemiology and move towards universal health coverage. According to the 2019 Global Health Security Index, a measure of the health system's readiness to manage an event like a global pandemic, the large majority of SIDS fall into the "least prepared" category. Small markets, high transport costs and lack of economies of scale for negotiating prices for drugs and medical technology result in high, variable prices. In many SIDS, the workforce capacity to respond to NCDs and mental health conditions is limited despite a dire need. Health information systems in SIDS are mostly weak and fragmented, which further limits the effectiveness of the response to NCDs and mental health.

As such globally, only a handful of countries are on track to meet SDG target 3.4 on NCDs for 2030, and most of the SIDS countries will not be achieving if the current trend continues. Pathway analyses in the

¹ Global Burden Disease (GBD) 2019 estimates

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NCD Countdown 2030 report however shows that, in 2021, every country still has options today for achieving SDG target 3.4 by 2030. There is a need to build the capacity of SIDS to implement a combination of measures that will strengthen their health systems, based on equity-focused and people-centred primary health care, to significantly impact NCD and mental health outcomes, and to further make progress towards achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and climate-resilient societies.

The virtual **WHO SIDS Summit for Health** convened in July 2021, resulted in the creation of **SIDS Voices for Health Leaders Group** comprised of several SIDS Heads of State and Government to champion SIDS and global health concerns. It urged Member States to strengthen their collaboration and partnership in support and recognition of the unique vulnerabilities of SIDS in addressing the various health needs and priorities and assisting the SIDS response to address persistent health, climate change and development challenges that they encounter².

The Government of Barbados and WHO, are co-hosting a **Ministerial Conference of SIDS on the Prevention and Control of NCDs and Mental Health in June 2023**. This represent a critical step towards building and pursuing a collective vision and course of action for accelerating progress towards SDGs target 3.4 and 3.8 in preparation for the second High-level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on Universal Health Coverage in 2023 and the fourth High-level Meeting on NCDs in 2025. To build political momentum for the Ministerial Conference in 2023, and to advance domestic action on NCDs and mental health in SIDS, by learning from achievements and challenges in SIDS since the CARICOM Summit on NCDs, the government of Barbados and WHO will be co-hosting a **SIDS High-level Technical Meeting on NCDs and Mental Health** prior to the Ministerial Conference.

The purpose of the meeting is to share experiences from senior representatives of SIDS Ministries of Health and partners on tackling premature mortality and disability associated with NCDs and mental health conditions, and to present the feasibility of adapting and applying these experiences in other countries.

Objectives

- **To discuss progress, challenges, and opportunities to scale up multi-sector actions on NCDs and mental health**, as part of the commitments made under the SIDS Health Summit 2021 and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway.
- **To present and discuss the WHO NCD Implementation Roadmap 2030** and its application in SIDS countries, while considering the impact of climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic, to accelerate national responses towards SDG target 3.4 on NCDs and mental health.
- **To share experiences from SIDS countries** on multi-sector and multi-stakeholder strategies, including youth engagement, to tackling premature mortality and disability associated with NCDs and mental health conditions, and to present the feasibility of adapting and applying these experiences in other countries. Experiences during the pandemic are important to be shared too, especially with mental health services and overcoming the disproportionate effect of COVID-19 on those with NCD risk factors

² A75/VR/8

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- **To discuss and identify key recommendations** to be included in the Outcome Document to be endorsed/adopted by the subsequent SIDS Ministerial meeting to scale up action on NCDs and mental health

Expected Outcomes:

1. SIDS pathways towards achieving SDG 3.4 for NCD and Mental Health
2. **A meeting report with key recommendations**, to serve as input for the negotiated Outcome Document to the Ministerial Conference of SIDS on the Prevention and Control of NCDs and Mental Health in June 2023

Participants: The **participants** for the high-level technical meeting on NCDs and Mental Health would include senior technical representatives from Ministries of Health and other government sectors responsible for national NCD and mental health responses, key regional/subregional bodies and partner countries, UN and other international organizations involved in health and development in SIDS and associate members, civil society representatives, eminent persons from within and beyond the SIDS, as well as people living with NCDs and mental health conditions. See **Annex 1**.

Format: The meeting would offer high-level panel discussions and technical plenary sessions, as well as interactive working groups to discuss concrete additional actions to achieve more together by 2030.

Annex 1 Meeting Participants:

Small Island Developing States (WHO Member State SIDS)

- AFRO: Cabo Verde, Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritius, Sao Tome & Principe, Seychelles
- AMRO: Antigua & Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts & Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago
- EMRO: Bahrain
- SEARO: Maldives, Timor Leste
- WPRO: Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu

Associate Members

- AMRO: Anguilla, Aruba, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Curacao, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Montserrat, Puerto Rico, Turks and Caicos Islands, Sint Maarten, U.S. Virgin Islands
- WPRO: American Samoa, Commonwealth of Northern Marianas, New Caledonia, French Polynesia, Guam

Partners from UN, SIDS- related Global and Regional Bodies, Multilateral Agencies, Partner governments, Civil Society, NGO, Philanthropies, academia will be invited to the hybrid meeting
