



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

23 January 2014

Excellency,

I have the honour to enclose herewith a letter dated 21 January 2014 from the Co-Facilitators of the informal consultative process on the modalities for the comprehensive review and assessment of the progress achieved in the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases, H.E. Ms. Bénédicte Frankinet, Permanent Representative of Belgium and H.E. Mr. Courtenay Rattray, Permanent Representative of Jamaica, inviting Member States to the first round of informal consultations on 29 January 2014.

Also attached is a copy of the "Informal Note on the modalities of the review and assessment of the progress achieved in the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases" from the Co-Facilitators. Please note that the Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Director-General of the World Health Organization on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (A/68/650) is available on the UN official document website (ODS).

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John W. Ashe". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

John W. Ashe

To All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York



Encl.2

New York, 21 January 2014

Excellency,

On 19 September 2011 the General Assembly held a High-Level Meeting on the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs). On that occasion, the General Assembly adopted Resolution 66/2, containing the Political Declaration that resulted from the High-Level Meeting.

In its §65, the Political Declaration requests the Secretary-General to present to the General Assembly at its 68th session a report on the progress achieved, in preparation of a comprehensive review and assessment in 2014. On 20 November 2013, the President of the General Assembly appointed the Permanent Representatives of Belgium and Jamaica as co-facilitators in order to consult with Member States and other relevant stakeholders on the modalities of the review of the progress on NCDs.

As co-facilitators we would like to invite you to a first round of informal consultations on 29 January 2014 (the exact time and venue will be announced in the Journal). We will brief you on our work so far and present for your consideration our preliminary findings, and ask for your guidance for the next phase of our mandate.

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

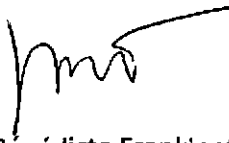
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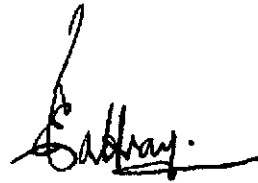
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As a background for these consultations, you will find attached the report of the Secretary-General on the progress achieved in realizing the commitments of the Political Declaration (A/68/650), as well as an informal note from our side with a series of questions for which we seek your views.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of our highest consideration.



Bénédicte Frankinet
Permanent Representative of Belgium
to the United Nations



Courtenay Rattray
Permanent Representative of Jamaica
to the United Nations

(20 January 2014)

Informal Note on the modalities of the review and assessment of the progress achieved in the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases

Background

In the Political Declaration of the 19-20 September 2011 High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (adopted by GA Resolution 66/2 on 19 September 2011), Member States recognized the NCDs-challenges and committed to take action in order to reduce risk factors for NCDs and create health-promoting environments, to strengthen national policies and health systems, to strengthen international cooperation, to promote research and development, and to strengthen monitoring and evaluation.

Paragraph 65 of the Political Declaration “requests the Secretary-General, in collaboration with Member States, the World Health Organization and relevant funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system to present to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session a report on the progress achieved in realizing the commitments made in this Political Declaration, including on the progress of multisectoral action, and the impact on the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, in preparation for a comprehensive review and assessment in 2014 of the progress achieved in the prevention and the control of non-communicable diseases.”

With his letter of 20 November 2013, the President of the General Assembly appointed the Permanent Representatives of Belgium and Jamaica to co-facilitate open, transparent and inclusive consultations on his behalf on the preparation of the comprehensive review and assessment. As a first input in this process, the co-facilitators have formulated a number of questions for consideration by Member States and relevant stakeholders.

Questions for discussion

1. Date. §65 calls for a comprehensive review and assessment “in 2014”. This means that there is a choice between the 68th session of the GA (up to 15 September 2014) and the 69th session (from 16 September 2014 until the end of the year, including the GA Opening Week). The choice of the date is related to the expected level of attendance. The Opening Week would allow reaching out to HoS/G, but this is a very busy week during which a NCDs-review might be crowded out by other high-level events.

Which in your view would be the preferred date?

2. Level of participation. The 2011 Political Declaration was adopted at HoS/G level. It might not be necessary to organize a “review” at the same level. Other options are political level (ministerial) or technical level. Organizing the review outside of the Opening Week would still allow Member States to aim for “the highest level possible” in determining the level of their delegation.

Which option would best serve the purpose of a review?

3. Format and duration. §65 speaks of a “comprehensive review and assessment”. Options include a regular meeting of the GA, a specific session dedicated to the review, a high-level event, a thematic debate. Taking into account the budgetary implications of meetings outside the regular GA calendar (including during the Opening Week) and the applicable rules for the participation of civil society and other stakeholders, a formal GA meeting seems the most straightforward option. The review could take one day; or more if this would be necessary. Round Tables parallel to the Plenary could be organized to address selected themes. As was the case in 2011, it is also possible to organize an informal NGO-hearing before the review meeting.

What do you consider as the best format for the review?

4. Scope. The main purpose of the review is to reflect upon the implementation, nationally as well as internationally, that has followed from the Political Declaration. It would seem that the review therefore would best focus on progress achieved (or lack thereof), best practices and remaining gaps. The Note of the Secretary-General (A/68/650) provides further input and details on-going efforts such as the global monitoring framework for NCDs, the global action plan adopted at the sixty-sixth World Health Assembly, and the Inter-agency Task Force on NCDs, as well as some action at the national level.

According to you, what would be the most suitable scope and focus of the review?

5. Outcome. The 2011 Political Declaration is an intergovernmentally agreed document. Given its recent date and the fact that implementation efforts are still underway, it would seem rather early to re-negotiate the Political Declaration. Nevertheless, should a summary by the PGA be considered insufficient, some form of negotiated outcome (resolution, agreed conclusions, ministerial declaration) could be envisaged.

What are your views on the format of the outcome of the review?

6. Substance. Although at this stage we are concentrating on the organizational arrangements and the format of the review, the co-facilitators welcome nevertheless views on any issues that may need to be discussed in the review.

Do you already have suggestions on substantive matters that should be dealt with during the review?

Next steps

On the basis of inputs received, the co-facilitators will formulate concrete proposals for the process leading up to the review. Should a modalities resolution be recommendable, they will present a first draft in February with a view of adoption in March 2014. The co-facilitators will call for further informal consultations as needed.