



Remarks

by

H.E. Mr. Mohamed Khaled Khiari

Vice-President

on behalf of

H.E. Mr. John W. Ashe

President of the 68th Session of the United Nations

General Assembly

High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the comprehensive
review and assessment of the progress achieved in the Prevention and

Control of Non-Communicable Diseases

Closing Statement

New York

11 July 2014

Please check against delivery

Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we come to the close of this High-level meeting, I am pleased to deliver this statement on behalf of the President of the General Assembly.

This review and assessment of the progress achieved in the prevention and control of non-communicable disease has been a follow-up to the 2011 Political Declaration. It was designed, inter alia, to look at progress achieved, identify and address gaps in implementation, reaffirm political commitments and encourage scaling-up multi-stakeholder and national multi-sectoral responses to the prevention and control of NCDs.

I believe that over the last two days, we have fulfilled this mission. I would like to thank all of our speakers, panellists and Chairs for engaging our minds with their contributions and perspectives. Yesterday, we adopted a robust Outcome Document, which provides a framework for intensifying our efforts and commitments at the national and international levels in the fight against NCDs.

We all know that there is much work ahead of us, a point that was reiterated many times during yesterday's General Debate. Member States underscored that NCDs are more than just a health issue; they have broader social and economic ramifications and are closely linked with development challenges like poverty reduction, food security and climate change.

In addition, we heard about the many challenges NCDs impose on societies leading to early death and disability, burdening caregivers and costing economies billions every year. We heard that the impact of NCDs is felt more deeply in developing countries, many of which are struggling with lack of capacity and resources to move from commitment to action. Many are in need of affordable medication and diagnostics. Several speakers felt that economic growth, modernization and urbanization have contributed to the spread of unhealthy lifestyles that have increased the risk factors for NCDs.

Yesterday's speakers also gave us cause for optimism by sharing their experiences, best practices and recommendations. We were informed about national public policy strategies to address risk factors such as tobacco use, harmful alcohol consumption, unhealthy diet and lack of physical exercise. We heard about the benefits of comprehensive national health programmes and the involvement of line ministries, including finance, health, education and social services. Many mentioned the need to approach NCDs holistically with coordination and cooperation among governments, health sector, businesses, academia, communities and others.

Several speakers emphasized the importance of data collection, national legislation and an enabling environment to support policy implementation. Technical assistance for capacity building, especially for developing countries, was emphasized as it will in turn strengthen the ability of countries to measure, monitor and assess progress made in addressing NCDs. In developing countries where capacity and resources are lacking, further collaboration with international and regional financial institutions was proposed by several Member States.

In regards to the Post-2015 development agenda, some speakers called for the integration of a NCDs/health-oriented goal or objective, including as a stand-alone goal. At the same time, many referred to the need to strengthen national health systems and move towards universal health coverage.

Excellencies,

After our two day session here, it is clear that we are all in agreement that NCDs are a constraint to global development and to achieving the world we want. Our Outcome Document reminds us that we must approach this challenge from all levels and angles, and that NCDs, along with other health issues, must be given strong consideration in negotiations on the post 2015 development agenda. We must also keep our attention focused on two important future dates: 1) the Secretary General's report to be issued by the end of 2017 on both the implementation of the Outcome Document adopted at this high-level meeting and the Political Declaration of 2011; and 2) a comprehensive review of progress on this issue to take place in 2018.

Between now and the next review, there should be ample opportunity to begin changing the landscape of NCDs. The path to sustainable development unites us all, and this is particularly so with managing the challenge of NCDs, which affects each one of us in one way or another. Let us stay united in the quest to improve the health and human development of all the world's people.

Thank you.
