



WHO Global Conference on Non-Communicable Diseases

The WHO Global Conference on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), hosted by the president of Uruguay, Tabaré Vázquez, took place in Montevideo from October 18-20.

The purpose of the event was to enhance policy coherence among the various spheres of policy making that impact the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) [target 3.4](#) on NCDs, which is to **reduce premature mortality from NCDs by one third by 2030 through prevention and treatment**.

This report provides a review of whole conference, including:

- Objectives
- Participants
- An overview of the main topics discussed
- Highlights from the Ministerial Forum
- A review of the Intersectional dialogue
- Conference materials (including speakers' presentations, panel moderators' reports and speeches by WHO officials, among other documents).

Objectives

- To provide guidance to Member States on how to meet SDG target 3.4 by 2030 by influencing public policies in various sectors (health, trade, and education, among others).
- To launch a set of new global initiatives which will help countries accelerate their progress to date in reducing premature mortality from NCDs.
- To exchange national experiences in enhancing policy coherence to meet the nine voluntary global NCD targets by 2025.

Who is responsible for reaching target 3.4?

8 Respuestas

President 50%

Minister of Health 38%

The public 13%

The conference program is available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

Participants

A wide variety of public policy decision makers were invited and speakers included:

- Heads of State and Government from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, among others.
- Ministers of Health from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Panama, Paraguay, Santa Lucía, Suriname and Uruguay, to name only authorities from Latin America.
- Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, WHO
- Carissa Etienne, Regional Director, Pan American Health Organization/WHO
- Oleg Chestnov, Assistant Director-General, Non-communicable Diseases and Mental Health, WHO

Avenida Entre Ríos 258 3E, Buenos Aires (1079), Argentina. Tel. + (5411) 5218-4647
1101 Brickell Avenue, South Tower, 8th Floor, Miami, Florida (33131). Tel. +1 (786) 828-0675



- Heads of private sector entities Thomas B. Cueni, Director General, International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations
- Heads from a number of non-state actors such as NCD Alliance, the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease, World Medical Association, Latin American and Caribbean Society of Medical Oncology, and the Norwegian Cancer Society
- Members of public institutions like Mexican National Institute of Public Health (INSP) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Representatives from philanthropic institutions such as Bloomberg Philanthropies, Médecins Sans Frontières
- Members of academic institutions, including the University of Illinois at Chicago, the University of Miami, University of California, San Diego,

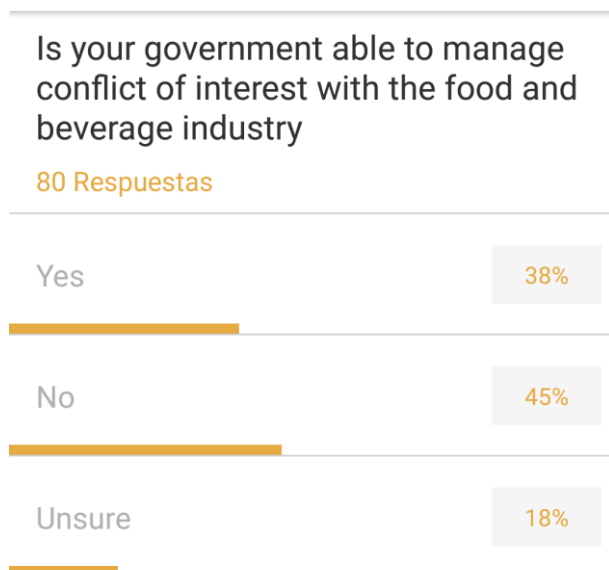
Conference final document

The Conference resulted in the adoption of the **outcome document known as the “Montevideo Roadmap 2018-2030 on NCDs as a sustainable development priority”** (available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)), which was endorsed and signed by the participants. The outcome document may also serve as a contribution to the discussions at the 71st World Health Assembly, to be held in Geneva in May 2018.

The contributions to the Conference held in Montevideo will also be extremely relevant to the intergovernmental process on the outcome document for the third High-Level Meeting on NCDs in 2018, which will take place under the auspices of the President of the UN General Assembly.

Our previous report on the intergovernmental drafting process for the Montevideo Roadmap is available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

Main topics discussed throughout the conference



The conference focused predominantly on public policies aimed at preventing NCDs, mostly by **curving unhealthy habits and guiding society and industry towards healthier choices. Regulation of the tobacco and food industries was the salient theme** for most panels and speeches throughout the three days of the conference.

Public health issues related to poor diet, smoking and physical inactivity received the most attention, which correlates to some of the “trending policies” being implemented in Latin America and Europe. Most notably, **several countries are currently revising regulations concerning product packaging and advertising**, while also **pushing for lower salt, sugar and fat contents in manufactured products** and related measures.

Another popular proposal is the **introduction of specific taxes which are expected to simultaneously combat unhealthy consumption trends while generating revenue** to be reinvested in health care. Such levies have been introduced or are under analysis in various countries around the world.

Highlights from the Ministerial Forum

Ministers and high ranking officials from 19 countries took part in this segment, presenting their public policy priorities and concerns.

Should all governments engage with the private sector to beat NCDs?

30 Respuestas

Yes

37%

Yes, but only after a risk assessment

50%

No

13%

The Health Minister of Zimbabwe explained how the African country introduced **health levies of up to 5% on taxable income in order to fund their system and invest in prevention**. His peer from Paraguay presented the **National Prevention Plan** which seeks to provide assistance to families and **guarantee free treatment for diabetes and hypertension**.

Health Vice Minister Arroyo from Peru pointed out the **need to restructure health systems** in the Andean nation, **harnessing technology to bridge geographical distances and obstacles**. He made a specific mention to the use of telehealth to enhance diagnoses and treatment for cancer patients, as exemplified by urban centers assessing mammograms belonging to women living in rural areas where there are no specialists available.

The Minister from Guyana mentioned growing **concern regarding tobacco and cancer** while announcing the country is also working on the introduction of taxes for sugary products. She highlighted the creation of a **presidential commission on NCDs**, a testament to Guyana's commitment in this area.

Within this segment it was the Health Minister of Sri Lanka who showed the greatest interest in the pharmaceutical industry, addressing the **need for essential medicines to treat NCDs**. He pointed to the island's success in **lowering the prices of medicines, stents and other products and pushed for local drug production**. The official had been praised earlier this week during the 9th World Health Summit held in Germany for Sri Lanka's efforts to tackle health challenges.

Minister Lemus, from Argentina, explained the strategies implemented by the southern state in fighting cancer and

Which area has the most potential for innovation in our NCDs response?

40 Respuestas

Financing

23%

Private sector engagement

30%

Advocacy

28%

Research

20%

other NCDs, which focus on **improving health centers and protecting vulnerable sectors of society from risk factors**. He also raised the issues of providing support for provincial ministries and, most notably, financing, mentioning a recent loan granted by the Inter-American Development Bank for the Argentine 2015 - 2020 health promotion program.

The Dominican Health Minister echoed her peers in highlighted the issues of **malnutrition, obesity, diabetes and hypertension** and mentioned concern regarding colon cancer before focusing on alcohol consumption, a major public health issue plaguing the Caribbean nation.

In one of his main speeches, President Vázquez presented **cancer, diabetes, and cardiovascular and respiratory diseases as the 4 predominant types of NCD** and signaled tobacco, unhealthy diets and sedentary lifestyles as the main causes. Vázquez, who is an oncologist, spoke of the **impact of these diseases on the health systems** and stated the cost of diabetes and cancer to reach US\$ 70 billion for the Latin American region alone. He closed his speech **calling the regional governments to collaborate in the fight against NCDs**.

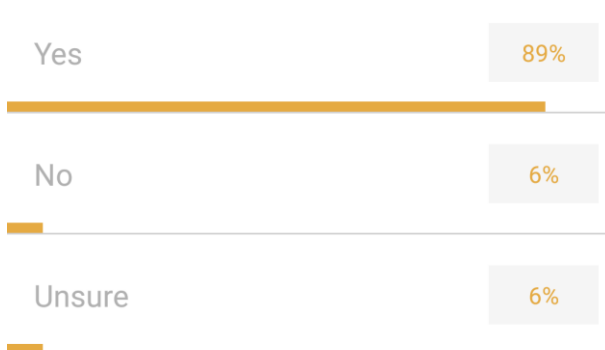
Intersectional dialogue

The panels and workshops focusing on dialogue between representatives from different sectors provided glimpses into different issues and areas when further work is needed.

The plenary session on mobilization of stakeholders and coherent solutions for NCDs picked up on the need to **include the private sector to work on voluntary restriction** and encouraging consumers to use their power to effect change. The speakers also addressed the **need to engage missing stakeholders such as NGOs and**

Should human rights be included in the 2018 UN General Assembly HLM on NCDs document?

90 Respuestas

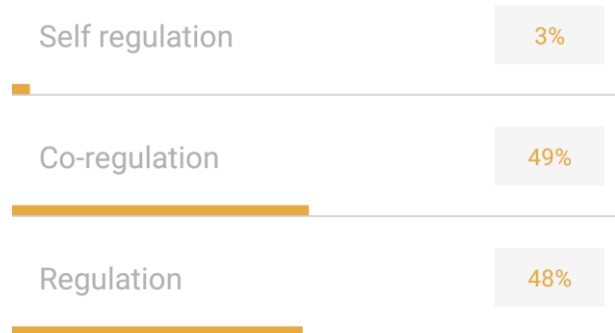


financial actors and touched on the need for sustainable policies. The cost of cancer treatment was one of the main concerns raised by the speakers, who insisted that more funding is needed and that collaboration with charities and other stakeholders is a positive approach to be encouraged.

Fernando Tomasina, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at University of the Republic of Uruguay, spoke about **health as a human right**, a concept that is central to the discussion about **shared responsibilities as regards public policies for health and disease and the tensions between the market forces**. He claimed states must generate policies to guarantee the adequate use of resources and that this relates to the incorporation of technology on the basis of evidence. Thus, a solid training in scientific technique becomes central for health professionals, as he explained.

What is the best way to encourage the private sector to contribute to NCDs control?

67 Respuestas



When questioned about which actors should be included in health policy, participants agreed unanimously that governments need to work side by side the private sector, though some interesting points were also made:

- **Fernando Tomasina** (Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, University of the Republic of Uruguay) stated that there must be transparency concerning conflicts of interest and underlined the importance of teaching ethics to health professionals.
- **Hussein Al Rand** (Assistant Undersecretary, Ministry of Health and Prevention, United Arab Emirates) proposed that states develop policies to attract stakeholders.
- **José Luis Castro** (Executive Director, International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease) insisted that certain harmful industries must be excluded, chiefly the tobacco industry.
- **Thomas B. Cueni** (Director General, International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations) expressed that collaboration is necessary for progress and that new treatments must be developed for diseases such as ebola and cancer, among others. He asked for heads of state and ministers of finance to adopt an active role in these discussions.
- **Lilibeth C. David**, Undersecretary (Office for Policy and Health Systems, Department of Health, Philippines) advocated for the expansion in the use of technology and agreed with the warnings on conflicts of interest.

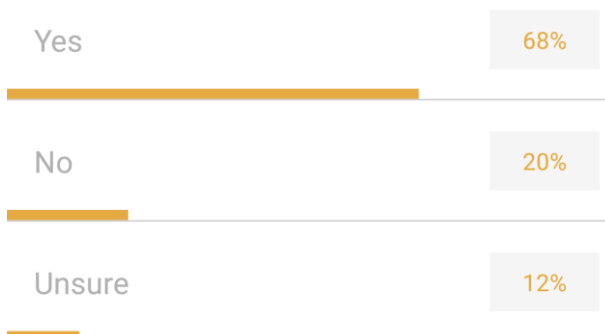
How can we accelerate progress to curb NCDs?

38 Respuestas



Do the benefits of engaging with the private sector outweigh the risks?

65 Respuestas



At another plenary session seeking to explore new lenses to address NCDs prevention and control, a number of speakers also looked at **conflicts of interest** and their impact in policy.

Viroj Sumyai, President of the International Narcotics Control Board, explained that **some substances aren't expensive and thus pharmaceutical companies prefer to focus on marketing other more costly products**. He made a strong plea for legislation to be passed; ensuring that access to medicines is not impeded and affirmed the need to ensure that these companies **guarantee the availability and affordability of drugs**.

Furthermore, he stated governments need to work with the industry to **produce cheaper and more innovative**



products, recognizing that laboratories must produce generic versions of drugs and not just their more expensive variants.

Linda Granlund, Director of the Norwegian Department for Public Health, concluded that **all parties need rules adapted to deal with the specifics of the conflicts of interest involved**.

The **plenary session on achieving the 2030 sustainable development goals** stressed the need for more research, with representatives of the WHO Global Coordination Mechanism on NCDs calling for all levels to partake in knowledge on NCDs.

Expanding on this issue, PAHO Director Carissa Etienne spoke in very strong terms against the **prevalence of private interests in the promotion of unhealthy products**. She also highlighted the **importance of integrating grassroots initiatives** within a greater bidirectional movement (both top to bottom and vice versa) in order to break inertia. Etienne **called for assertive and effective state action**, as well as acknowledging the need **for more investment in NCDs**. This point was shared by Christopher Wild, Director of WHO's International Agency for Research on Cancer, who pointed out that there is no known cause for one third of cancers, making prevention impossible.

Sandeep Kishore, President of the Young Professionals Chronic Disease Network, asked for the **inclusion of cancer medicines in the list of essential medicines** and **partnerships with the private sector** to produce drugs before focusing on issues of equity and impact. He stressed the need to promote evidence-based measures and commit to action.

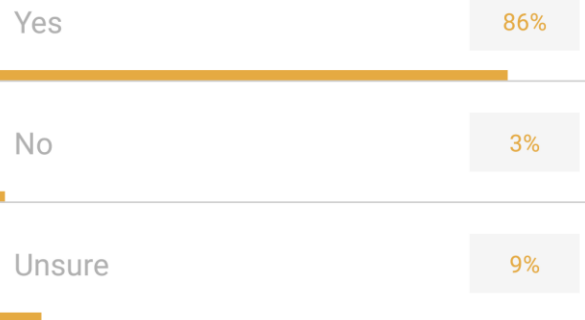
Ilona Kickbusch, Director of the Global Health Center, shared similar concerns and described the **challenges ahead as "a tsunami of disease and inequality" requiring "strong legal and regulatory action"**. She identified key areas for government intervention, such as **taxation of alcohol, tobacco and sugar, assistance to poor countries, promotion of ethical investment and new alliances to fight for social justice**.

Sania Nishtar, recently named co-chair of the WHO High-level Commission on NCDs, further developed the need for stronger action and cooperation, particular within the different areas of government, which **calls for presidents to commit and support Health Ministers**. The expert analyzed the current regulatory situation, presenting a very critical view of governmental ineptitude and stating that "When it comes to NCDs, the lack of coordinated effort has been mind-boggling".

In his closing words President Vázquez once more pointed out the state's responsibility in standing up against unethical business and sentenced that **"human rights and the right to life and health are above any trade agreement."**

Can governments introduce innovative solutions in their NCDs responses?

35 Respuestas



Conference materials

These are all the currently available conference materials.

Experts Panel

Reports:

[Jonathan Klein - Experts panel](#)

Documents:

[Speech: Dr Ala Alwan, Regional Director Emeritus](#)

[Katie Dain, NCD Alliance Statement](#)

[Publication on environmental risks and NCDs](#)

[Infographic Health and Environment \(pdf\)](#)

Ministerial Forum (Part 1)

Reports:

[Jonathan Klein - Ministerial Forum I](#)

Ministerial Forum (Part 2)

Reports:

[Katherine Pettus - Ministerial Forum II](#)

Ministerial Forum (Part 3)

Reports:

[Jonathan Klein - Ministerial Forum III](#)

High-level segment

Reports:

[Katherine Pettus - High Level Segment](#)

Documents:

[United States Government Statement on the Montevideo Roadmap](#)

Workshop 1.1

Reports:

[Trevor Shilton - Success stories on NCD prevention and control](#)

Workshop 1.2

Reports:

[Francis Thompson - Success stories on using taxation and other fiscal policies on tobacco and unhealthy](#)

Documents:

[Workshop 1.2 Information Note](#)



Less than 30% of
low-income countries
have generally available
diagnosis and treatment
services for **cancer**.



Strengthening
early diagnosis improves
chances of survival
for millions living
with **cancer**.



In 2010 the total cost
of **cancer** was estimated
at **US\$ 1.16 trillion**;
this cost is on the rise.



Workshop 1.3

Presentations:

[Mohsen ASADI-LARI - Integration of NCD efforts in PHC in Iran](#)

Workshop 1.5

Reports:

[Matthew Barnhart - Universal Health Coverage for Achieving SDG 3.4: Best Practices, Innovative Solutions, and Lessons Learned](#)

Documents:

[Workshop 1.5 Information Note](#)

Workshop 1.6

Reports:

[Alexey Kulikov - Success story: developing national NCD and tobacco investment cases to prioritize action and mobilize resources – innovative solutions, best practices and lessons learned](#)

Documents:

[Workshop 1.6 Information Note](#)

Plenary - NCDs through a broader lens

Reports:

[Simone Bösch - NCDs through a broader lens](#)

Workshop 2.1

Reports:

[Ann Willhoite - Success story on promoting mental health and wellbeing: Innovative solutions, best practices and lessons learned](#)

Documents:

[Workshop 2.1 Information Note](#)

Workshop 2.2

Documents:

[Workshop 2.2 Information Note](#)

Workshop 2.6

Presentations:

[Sonia Angell - Making Healthy Easy Through Health Systems Change](#)

[Fatima Marinho - Improved Fruits/Vegetables production and consumption for better health](#)



Cancer causes almost
1 in 6 deaths globally.
Early diagnosis can greatly
reduce this burden.



More than 14 million
people develop **cancer**
every year, and this is
set to rise to > 21 million
by 2030.



We can eliminate
cervical cancer as a public
health problem through
intensified vaccination
against HPV, screening
and treatment.





[Amirhossein Takian - Food policies in Iran](#)

[Gina Radford: Obesity action in England](#)

[Melanie Paccot: Chile's law on food labeling and advertising](#)

Documents:

[Workshop 2.6 Information Note](#)

Plenary - Getting to 2030: Summary of parallel workshop

Reports:

[Maik Dünnbier - Getting to 2030 Summary of parallel workshops](#)

Plenary - Getting to 2030: Innovative solutions

Presentations:

[Francesco Branca - Country led actions to address unhealthy diet](#)

[Dr Douglas Bettcher - Progress & Innovative Solutions for NCD Prevention and Control](#)

[Thomas Novotny - Implementation Research to Accelerate Progress in Noncommunicable Disease Prevention and Control](#)

[Shekhar Saxena - Innovative Solutions Mental Health](#)

Plenary - Getting to 2030: Pathway forward

Documents:

[Speech Ilona Kickbusch](#)

Closing Ceremony

Documents:

[Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus closing speech](#)



Most people diagnosed with **cancer** live in low- and middle-income countries, where **70%** of cancer deaths occur.



By 2030, reduce by one-third premature mortality from **cancer** and other noncommunicable diseases

- SDG target 3.4

