

Tenth meeting of the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of NCDs on COVID-19 and the NCD-related SDGs

Date of meeting: 12 June 2020

Participants: Over 30 participants joined, representing 13 Member agencies of the Task Force.

Summary:

1. The theme for this meeting was: Positioning human rights within the COVID-19 response: What UNIATF member need to consider. Presentation (attached) was given by Lynn Gentile from OHCHR and interventions were made by IDLO, ILO, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNICEF, UNODC, WFP and the World Bank.
2. The COVID-19 pandemic has been featuring significant human rights' dimensions. Some of the critical areas to be highlighted are: 1) Right to health challenges (poor integration of human rights into health care systems; de-prioritization of "non-COVID-19" sectors, including mental health); 2) Socio-economic implications (access to remote learning for children in vulnerable settings; effect on fragile and marginalized populations; people working in informal sector with no access to social security; etc.).
3. Members of the Task Force discussed: (i) how to make sure a human rights approach is taken into consideration in their activities; and (ii) how human rights action can be part of the effort to build back better.
4. IDLO reminded the importance of checks and balances when governments need to restrict rights, as a consequence of the public health emergency. ILO brought attention to the many occupational scenarios that need to be considered and referred to guidance recently produced.¹ UNAIDS raised the problem of gender-based violence and the importance of services provided at the community level. Participants discussed the integration of NCD services in the people-centered, community-based health service delivery systems, with major opportunities for countries to include NCDs in their COVID-19 recovery plans (using COVID-19 funding). UNICEF reiterated the impact of lockdowns on child development, with increased risk of child abuse. Effects on children with developmental delays and disabilities were also discussed.²
5. WHO FCTC Secretariat informed participants about the recent major legal victory of public health and tobacco control. WTO's Appellate Body ruled in favor of Australia's policy on plain packaging for tobacco products. This decision puts an end to the disputes which began in 2012 and saw Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Honduras and Indonesia raising legal complaints regarding Australia's plain packaging law. The Convention Secretariat recognizes the importance of this decision, which finally allows the 182 Parties of the WHO FCTC to implement effective packaging and labelling measures, as per Article 11 of the Convention, and to

¹ Social protection guidance : https://www.ilo.org/secsoc/information-resources/publications-and-tools/Brochures/WCMS_744612/lang-en/index.htm

² Information on Covid19 and Children with Developmental Delays and Disabilities: <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-disability/covid-19/>; https://www.unicef.org/disabilities/files/COVID-19_response_considerations_for_people_with_disabilities_190320.pdf

undertake a comprehensive ban (or restrictions) on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship, as per Article 13, without breaching WTO law.³

6. Members of the Task Force were informed about the extension of the Task Force awards' call for proposals till 3 July. Nominations of ministries outside of health and of UN Country Teams are particularly encouraged.
7. The Task Force Secretariat updated participants on the progress made around the UN position paper on COVID-19, NCDs and development (with recommendations on how to build back better). The consolidated draft will be shared with the Task Force members for comments and inputs.

Actions:

1. Task Force Secretariat to continue arranging the weekly calls on different themes. In addition to sessions being planned, consider sessions on: health taxes and legal issues; COVID-19 and disability.
2. Agencies to continue to share new publications/other outputs as they emerge with Task Force Secretariat (to be linked on the website).
3. Task Force members to promote the 2020 Task Force awards and disseminate the [call for proposals](#) on their webpages and social media. **Please note that the call is extended until 3 July.**

Next meeting:

- Friday 19 June 2020 at 4 pm CET. Theme: United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund to Catalyze Country Action for Non-Communicable Diseases and Mental Health
- Friday 26 June 2020 at 4 pm CET. Theme: COVID-19 and food security. WFP to lead the session.

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³ <https://www.who.int/fctc/mediacentre/press-release/wto-landmark-legal-victory-tobacco-plain-packaging/en/>