

United Nations Health4Life Fund

Catalyzing country action on non-communicable diseases and mental health through the United Nations' Health4Life Fund

High-Level Side Event

Co-hosted by Kenya and Scotland
during the Seventy-seventh World Health Assembly

28 May 2024, 8.30-10.00 CET

Nations Business Center, 1 rue du Pre-de-la-Bichette, Genève

Participation by invitation only

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

Since 2000, when the World Health Assembly endorsed the WHO Global Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Disease (NCDs), the importance of *NCDs as a health and development priority* has increased. In 2013, the United Nations Economic and Social Council established the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of NCDs to support countries scale up action on NCDs and mental health.

In 2021, three of the members of the Task Force, UNDP, UNICEF, and WHO established the United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund to Catalyze Country Action for Non-communicable Diseases & Mental Health – known as the *Health4Life Fund (H4LF)* – to chart a course toward a new health financing paradigm that centers the voice of the Global South and embodies a forward-looking, participatory, inclusive, and equitable approach to addressing the multi-faceted challenges of NCDs and mental health.

H4LF aims to raise *USD 250 million of catalytic funding over 5 years* to incentivize low- and middle-income countries to scale up WHO and broader UN-recommended evidence-based interventions that are cost-effective and have a high impact in saving lives and ensuring people lead longer, healthier, happier, and more prosperous lives. This supports all three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social, and environmental.

H4LF is at the vanguard of the *changing landscape of global health financing* which centers the leadership of Global South countries. H4LF's Steering Committee includes three Founding Strategic Partners from the Global South (Kenya, Thailand, and Uruguay) and civil society organizations with a strong presence in the Global South.

The Fund will also provide a platform for *south-to-south technical cooperation*, shared learning, and building solidarity. Not only does this provide an opportunity for countries to support each other

A fund administered by



United Nations
MPHF Office



unicef
for every child



World Health
Organization



UN INTERAGENCY
TASK FORCE ON NCDs



and build long-lasting relationships which prioritize health (including mental health), it also promotes, gives voice to, and elevates local knowledge, and prioritizes lived experience.

Investment is one of the concrete actions of the WHO Global NCD Compact, 2020-2030.¹ The Compact indicates that H4LF is ‘*one of the global financing partnerships to support LMICs to mobilize domestic resources and to scale up action*’. In addition to supporting action for investment, H4LF contributes to the other actions in the Compact, including:

- *Accelerating country action* – by providing catalytic funding to support countries scale up and accelerate action, clearing bottlenecks that impede progress.
- *Aligning* – by committing funds to support the strategies and plans of countries and harmonizing action – through a joined-up UN system response.
- *Engaging* – by working with governments, academia, non-governmental organizations, philanthropies, the private sector, civil society, and people with lived experiences of NCDs and mental health conditions.

In the lead-up to the WHO/World Bank Second Global Dialogue on Sustainable Financing for Non-communicable Diseases and Mental Health in June 2024 and the fourth high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases in 2025, this side event provides a call to action for Member States to pool resources for LMICs to implement proven, cost-effective interventions that will lead to a significant reduction in premature mortality (SDG3.4) from NCDs and mental health.

The Government of Kenya was at the forefront of efforts to establish the H4LF. In 2023, the Scottish Government’s First Minister Humza Yousaf, announced a contribution of GBP 2.5 million (USD 3.1 million) to the Health4Life Fund at the 78th UN General Assembly. Scotland is a full member of the Steering Committee alongside the Founding Strategic Partners and Participating UN Agencies.

Objective

To provide an update on the progress achieved by the Health4Life Fund and to explore the opportunities it presents as a vehicle for scaling up country investments in NCDs and mental health.

Programme

Welcome and opening remarks

- Helga Fogstad, Director for Health Programmes, UNICEF

Strategic partners panel discussion

- Nakhumicha S. Wafula, EGH, Cabinet Secretary for Health, Kenya
- Professor Sir Gregor Smith, Chief Medical Officer, Scotland
- Dr Kailesh Kumar Jagutpal, Minister of Health and Wellness, Mauritius
- Dr. Emmie Liza Perez-Chiong, Undersecretary of Health, Philippines
- Dr Karina Rando, Ministra de Salud Pública, Uruguay

Moderator: Alan Donnelly, The G20 Health and Development Partnership

¹ [Global NCD Compact 2020-2030 \(who.int\)](https://www.who.int/global-ncd-compact)

Panel discussion on Health4Life country action

- Dr Sabin Nsanzimana, Minister of Health, Rwanda
- Sylvia Tembo Masebo, Minister of Health, Zambia
- Mary Muia, President-elect, Soroptimist International Africa Federation and UN Representative, Soroptimist International
- Name Pubudu Sumanasekara, Board Member, NCD Alliance

Moderator: Svetlana Akselrod, Director, Global NCD Platform, WHO

Closing remarks and call to action

- Dr Jérôme Salomon, Assistant Director-General, Universal Health Coverage/ Communicable and Noncommunicable Diseases, WHO