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Third steering committee meeting of the United Nations Health4Life Fund: summary report, 18 March 2024

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Contents

1. Objectives and participants.....	3
2. Welcome and introductions.....	3
3. Update on Trust Fund activities.....	3
4. Discussion and decision points.....	4
5. Discussion of WHA77 side event	6
6. Timing of next meeting	6
Annex 1: List of participants and observers	8
Annex 2: Agenda for the Third Steering Committee Meeting of the United Nations Health4Life Fund, 18 March 2024.	10

1. Objectives and participants

- A. The Third Steering Committee Meeting of the United Nations Health4Life Fund (H4LF)¹ was held on 18 March 2024. The meeting was co-chaired by Svetlana Akselrod, Director of the Global NCD Platform, World Health Organization (WHO) on behalf of Jérôme Salomon, Assistant Director-General, Universal Health Coverage (Communicable and Noncommunicable Diseases) and Mandeep Dhaliwal, Director of HIV and Health Group, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The full list of participants is in Annex 1.
- B. The objective of the meeting was for the Steering Committee to receive an update on the status of grantmaking activities, resource mobilization, and partnership development, and to discuss strategic directions for the Fund in these areas. The agenda is in Annex 2.

2. Welcome and introductions

- C. Svetlana Akselrod delivered Jérôme Salomon's opening remarks on his behalf. The statement highlighted that this meeting coincides with ongoing preparations for several global events including the UN High Level Meeting on Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health to be held on the margins of the 2025 UN General Assembly. UNICEF's opening remarks delivered by Helga Fogstad, Director for Health Programmes on behalf of Deputy Executive Director Omar Abdi, anticipated significant community level impact of the Fund. Both sets of remarks welcomed Scotland's support for H4LF and expressed gratitude for the financial contribution of GBP 2.5 million.
- D. Harry Kimtai, Principal Secretary, Ministry of Health, Government of Kenya welcomed Scotland, as Kenya is one of the Fund's first Strategic Partners. In his remarks, Dr Kimtai emphasized Kenya's ongoing commitment to the Fund.
- E. Professor Sir Gregor Smith, Scotland's Chief Medical Officer, welcomed the opportunity to provide technical and strategic leadership to the Fund and applauded its focus on Global South leadership. He recalled that 25 of the 28 lives lost every minute prematurely from NCDs occur in the Global South, driven by systemic inequalities, and indicated that Scotland's contribution to the H4LF was designed to address this.

3. Update on Trust Fund activities

- F. The H4LF Secretariat and the Multi Partner Trust Fund Office provided an update on progress since the second meeting, including:
 - (i) A review of the status of action on the second meeting's decision points. The policy for engagement with non-State actors was finalized and approved by the Steering Committee, and the participating UN organizations (PUNOs) agreed on

¹ The United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund to Catalyze Country Action for Non-Communicable Diseases and Mental Health

- arrangements for conducting due diligence. The Steering Committee also received a costed resource mobilization roadmap, and the Secretariat developed a logo for the Fund;
- (ii) An overview of the Fund’s financial status;
 - (iii) An update was provided regarding ongoing efforts to initiate grantmaking operations which included a call for expressions of interest from Malawi, Rwanda and Zambia that was placed in December 2023. Concept notes were received, reviewed by the Secretariat and Core Team, and a recommendation was made to the Steering Committee on the way forward;
 - (iv) An update was given on the status of emerging partnerships with Member States and non-State actors; and
 - (v) An update was provided on advocacy and communications activities, for example, activities surrounding UNGA77, and plans for an event to be co-hosted by Kenya and Scotland on the margins of WHA77 in May 2024.

4. Discussion and decision points

- G. The Steering Committee warmly welcomed the Scottish Government’s partnership and expressed confidence in the impact that Scotland’s participation in the Steering Committee will have in advancing the mission of the Fund.

Decision point

D1. The Steering Committee welcomes Scottish Government’s partnership and invites their full participation on the Steering Committee.

- H. The Steering Committee welcomed progress in soliciting and reviewing concept notes from Malawi, Rwanda, and Zambia as part of initiating grantmaking activities and noted that the process had provided the opportunity to refine the operations guidance. The Steering Committee agreed with the Secretariat’s assessment that Rwanda’s concept note was the strongest, with Zambia a close second, while Malawi’s was weaker. The Secretariat therefore recommended funding Rwanda and Zambia. Taking into consideration that both proposals seek USD 1M funding over 3 years and that funds are not currently available to cover both countries’ year 1 requirements, the Secretariat proposed funding Rwanda first, and then following on with full proposal development for Zambia when additional funds became available.
- I. Scotland presented an alternative proposal: that both Rwanda and Zambia should proceed to the full proposal development stage in advance of deciding on funding. No objections were noted and, therefore, this proposal was accepted. The process for proposal development, review, country selection and grantmaking was explained by the Secretariat.

- J. The Steering Committee also requested that the Secretariat explore opportunities for providing support to countries that were unsuccessful with concept notes and proposals in the future, for example, through country-to-country peer technical support and/or a shared learning platform.
- K. The Steering Committee requested the Secretariat to develop a results framework against which the Fund's progress can be measured once country grantmaking begins, to ensure that there is a shared idea of what success looks like at country level.
- L. The Steering Committee reviewed the Secretariat Project which allocates funding to enable the Secretariat and Core Team to undertake essential activities for grantmaking operations, strategic partnerships, and resource mobilization in 2024.

Decision points

D2. The Steering Committee notes progress on operations and grantmaking. The next step is for the Steering Committee to receive full proposals from Rwanda and Zambia along with the Secretariat's funding recommendation for its review and endorsement.

D3. The Steering Committee endorsed the Secretariat Project and authorizes the MPTF Office to allocate funding for the project.

- M. A discussion of the promising progress made with regards existing and new partnerships with specific Member States (including a Small Island Developing State) and non-State actors was held. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), who are leading some of these partnership efforts, moderated a broader discussion on prioritization of resource mobilization efforts moving forward.
- N. Scotland enquired about the Fund's strategy for approaching high net worth individuals and foundations. The Secretariat noted that the Fund's main initial focus has been to secure additional Member State support. The Fund's resource mobilization strategy calls for 75% of funds to be secured from government donors with 25% from private sources following what is typical for UN funding. Nevertheless, the Secretariat has pursued many corporate and foundation leads. There is currently one significant on-going donor opportunity being led by UNICEF USA and UNICEF that is expected to come to fruition in April/May 2024. The Secretariat is prepared to explore any non-state actor leads with the Fund's strategic partners and PUNOs.
- O. It was agreed that the Fund should invite the first private sector partner to come on board to host a fundraising activity geared towards cultivating further partnerships specifically with other non-State actors. It was suggested that this event could be held on the margins of the World Health Summit in Berlin in October 2024 or at the World Economic Forum in

Davos. A similar Member State focused event led by the Scottish Government and the second Member State which makes a financial contribution to the Fund was also suggested.

- P. NCD Alliance presented two upcoming events where they would welcome H4LF participation. First, a round table event being hosted on 27 May 2024 during WHA77 on the NCD and Mental Health financing agenda ahead of the WHO and World Bank Financing Dialogue in June. Second, the Global Forum on 20-22 October 2024 in Kigali, in partnership with the Rwanda NCD Alliance and the Rwanda Biomedical Centre. NCDA would welcome a side event led by H4LF during the Forum.
- Q. Kenya recommended that H4LF consider the International Conference on PEN Plus in Africa scheduled to be held in Dar es Salaam in April 2024 as an additional opportunity for outreach with Member States.
- R. UNICEF requested the Secretariat to create a calendar of events related to NCDs and Mental Health to be populated by all partners, alongside which potential activities for increasing the Fund's visibility can be planned.

Decision points

D4. The Steering Committee notes progress made by the Secretariat and PUNOs in engaging with other partners and requests the Secretariat and PUNOs (core team with the support of the agencies' broader resource mobilization capacity) to continue to develop these partnerships.

D5. The Steering Committee requests the Secretariat to create a calendar of events related to NCDs and Mental Health to be populated by all partners, alongside which potential activities for increasing the Fund's visibility can be planned.

5. Discussion of WHA77 side event

- S. The Governments of Kenya and Scotland presented on the event they plan to co-host on the margins of the 77th World Health Assembly on 28 May 2024, 08:30-10:00 CET at Nations Business Center in Geneva. They both requested that all efforts are made to ensure the highest level of participation from UN agencies and Member State participants, as this would increase the effectiveness of the event for raising the Fund's profile and cultivating new partners. Scotland requested all Steering Committee members and observers to share the names of prospective contributors from their network with the Secretariat in order to include them on the invitation list.

6. Timing of next meeting

- T. The Steering Committee proposed that the next meeting take place in October or November of 2024. The Secretariat was requested to strongly consider having an in-person rather than a virtual meeting, potentially in the margins of another meeting where a number of the Steering Committee members would be participating.
- U. Ahead of the fourth meeting a summary of the third meeting will be prepared and made available on the [H4LF webpage](#) on the [UN NCD Inter-Agency Task Force](#) website.

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Annex 1: List of participants and observers

Steering Committee Members (PUNOs)

WHO (permanent co-chair): Svetlana AKSELROD: Director, Global NCD Platform, on behalf of Jérôme Salomon, Assistant Director General, UCN

UNDP (rotating co-chair): Mandeep Dhaliwal, Director, HIV and Health

UNICEF: Helga FOGSTAD, UNICEF Director for Health Programmes, on behalf of Omar Abdi, Deputy Executive Director of Programmes

Strategic Partners

Kenya: Harry KIMTAI, Permanent Secretary for Health, on behalf of Hon Susan Nakhumicha Wafula, Cabinet Secretary for Health

Scotland: Professor Sir Gregor SMITH, Chief Medical Officer

Uruguay: Dr Marianela BUZZI, Advisor to the Minister of Health

Steering Committee Ex-Officio Member

Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office: Jennifer TOPPING, Executive Coordinator

Observers

NCD Alliance: Alison COX, Policy and Advocacy Director

United for Global Mental Health: James SALE, Deputy CEO

Multi-Partner Trust Fund Secretariat (MPTF), Global NCD Platform, WHO

Mamka ANYONA: Policy and Strategy Lead

Nick BANATVALA: Head of Secretariat, UN Inter-Agency Task Force for the Prevention and Control of NCDs

Alexandra LADAK: Assistant, UN Inter-Agency Task Force for the Prevention and Control of NCDs

Linda MERIEAU: Partnerships and Resource Mobilization Lead

Delegations

UNDP

Roy SMALL: Policy Specialist, Health and NCDs

Dudley TARLTON: Programme Specialist, Health and Innovative Financing

UNICEF

Raoul BERMEJO: Health Specialist, Child, Community Health and NCDs, Health Section

Rory NEFDT: Senior Advisor Health, Head Child, Community Health and NCDs, Health Section

Fouzia SHAFIQUE: Associate Director for Health

WHO

Dan CHISHOLM: Department of Mental Health and Substance Use

Susana MARTINEZ: Lead, Interagency Collaboration, Funds, Banks and Multilaterals, CRM

Bente MIKKELSEN: Director, Department of NCDs
Diana WU: Advisor for ADG-UCN Office

MPTF Office

Bavo CHRISTIAENS: Portfolio Manager, UN MPTF Office

Kenya

Gladwell GATHECHA: Head of NCD Department, Ministry of Health
Elizabeth ONYANGO: NCD Department, Ministry of Health

Scotland

Lesley CRICHTON: Professional Advisor, NHS Scotland Global Citizenship Programme
Niall MCCUMESTY: Senior Programme Officer, Office of International Development
Phoebe SPURR: Deputy Head of International Development

Uruguay

Gabriela GOMEZ: Director of International Relations and Cooperation, Ministry of Health

Annex 2: Agenda for the Third Steering Committee Meeting of the United Nations Health4Life Fund, 18 March 2024.

Time	Agenda Item	Presenter/Moderator	Background Papers
14:00-14:15	1. Welcome and introductions	WHO: Svetlana Axelrod, Director Global NCD Platform UNICEF: Helga Fogstad, Director of Health Programmes	1.1: List of participants.
14:15-14:30	2. Introduction of Scotland to H4LF Steering Committee	Government of Kenya: Harry Kimtai, Principal Secretary Scottish Government: Professor Sir Gregor Smith, Chief Medical Officer	
14:30-14:50	3. Progress report from the Secretariat and Core Team	Presented by the Health4Life Fund Secretariat	3.1: Summary report of the second Steering Committee meeting. 3.2: Progress report (PowerPoint).
14:50-15:10	4. Discussion on operations & grantmaking: i. Country selection for initial grantmaking based on Scottish Government funds ii. Decision point: Approval of Secretariat Project	Moderated by Health4Life Fund Secretariat	4.1: Country selection for grantmaking. 4.2: Secretariat project. 4.3: Revised Operations Manual. 4.4 MPTF Funding Framework.
15:10-15:30	5. Discussion on resource mobilization: i. Update on prospective partnerships ii. Discussion of fundraising priorities and activities for 2024	Moderated by UNICEF: Helga Fogstad	
15:30-15:50	6. Discussion on WHA77 H4LF side event	Kenya: Gladwell Gathecha, Director of NCDs Department Scotland: Professor Sir Gregor Smith, Chief Medical Officer	6.0: WHA77 side event concept note.
15:50-16:00	7. Wrap up and date and time of next meeting	UNDP: Mandeep Dhaliwal, Director, HIV and Health	