

Campaign update: NCD advocates raise their voices at UN multistakeholder hearing

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On Friday, 2 May, civil society advocates participated in the interactive multistakeholder hearing convened as part of preparations for the fourth UN High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of NCDs and the Promotion of Mental Health and Well-being (HLM4), taking place this September. The hearing served as a vital opportunity for advocates to deliver clear messages to governments ahead of the HLM4.

Advocates from across the globe came together to represent civil society voices — from different countries, communities, and sectors — all calling for stronger leadership on NCDs and mental health.

Their presence in New York this week helped amplify the voices of the over 2.5 million people who have signed on to the Call to Lead on NCDs, urging world leaders to mobilise Investment; accelerate Implementation; and deliver accountability.

During the open discussion, advocates took the floor to highlight the need for meaningful engagement, sustainable financing, stronger mental health integration, and governance free from industry interference. Their interventions underscored the urgency of moving from rhetoric to results — especially for people living with NCDs and mental health conditions.

“The last decade has been described as a policy success but an implementation failure. The HLM4 must change that — by renewing commitments to the cost-effective policies we know can reduce NCD risk factors and improve access to care,” said Katie Dain, CEO of the NCD Alliance, speaking at the Multi-Stakeholder Hearing.

As the WHO Civil Society Working Group representative, Lucero Andaluz Llerena, put it:

“Governments must strengthen public health governance by establishing enforceable safeguards to prioritise

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public health over commercial interests and prevent conflicts of interest and undue influence from health-harming industries.”

The day also featured powerful contributions from leaders such as Maisha Hutton of the Healthy Caribbean Coalition, who reminded governments that:

“The financial burden of NCDs cannot and must not continue to sit solely on the shoulders of the State while the unhealthy commodity industry continues to externalise costs. Governments must take bold action to reshape health systems and the environments in which they operate — away from health-harming and profit-generating, towards health-promoting and life-enhancing.”

With just months to go before HLM4, this hearing was a critical step toward ensuring civil society voices are heard — and reflected in the Political Declaration.

We’ll continue pushing for bold commitments in the lead-up to September — and we’re grateful to everyone in our community helping carry this momentum forward.

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