

Africa NCDs Network drives advocacy during regional committee meetings for Africa

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The Africa NCDs Network (ANN), in collaboration with the NCD Alliance, prepares and presents statements on agenda items related to NCDs at the WHO Africa Regional Committee Meetings (RCM).

Held every year, the RCMs are held annually to discuss and monitor the progress of health-related commitments in the Member States. In 2022, the 72nd RCM was held in Lome, Togo from 22-26 August, as a hybrid event

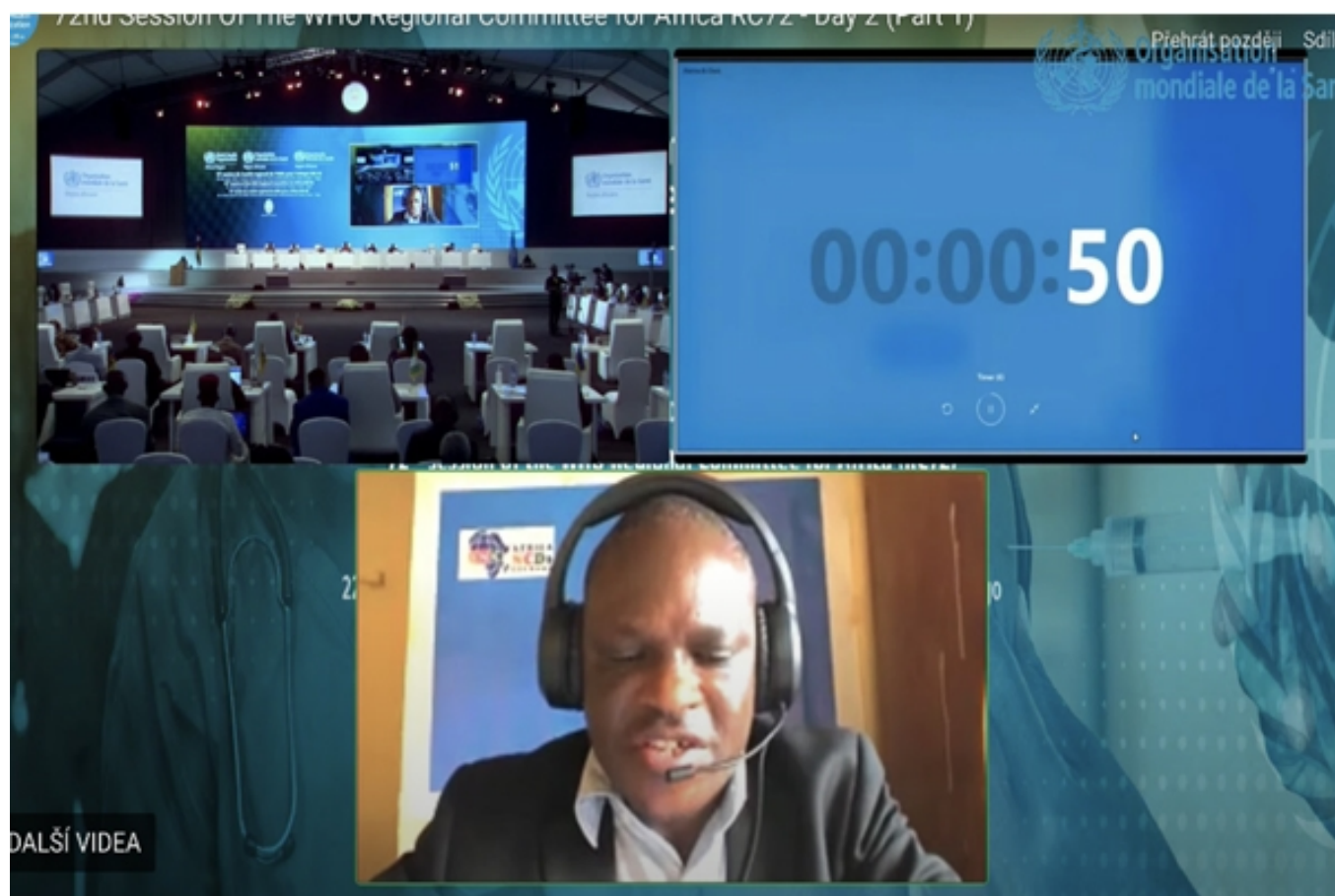
This year, the ANN and its partners selected two agenda items: Agenda Item 7, PEN-Plus – A regional strategy to address severe [noncommunicable diseases](#). [1]at first-level referral health facilities; and Agenda Item 8, Framework to strengthen the implementation of the comprehensive mental health action plan 2013–2030 in the WHO African Region.

The ANN Secretariat drafted the statements and shared them with various stakeholders, including ANN Members, for their input to ensure they represented views from the broad base membership of national and regional alliances and civil society organizations (CSOs) working in close collaboration with the ANN.

Partners in Health (PIH) also supported the PEN-Plus agenda, contributing to the statement. Amongst others, the following recommendations were made by this solid collaborative network for consideration by the Member States and the WHO Regional Office on the PEN-Plus agenda item:

- Ensure health service providers are well trained, receive on-the-job specialist mentorship and are equipped to support implementation.
- Increase investments in the prevention and control of NCDs, including funding for implementing the PEN-Plus strategy.
- Ensure meaningful involvement of all relevant stakeholders, including people living with NCDs, in designing and implementing PEN-Plus care and benefit packages, and eliminate the risk of catastrophic health expenditure.
- Prioritize timely progress reviews and ensure the meaningful involvement of people living with NCDs in the

strategy's proposed mid-term and end-term reviews.



Henry Ndhlovu ANN Secretariat Member reading the PEN-Plus statement virtually during the 72nd WHO RCM

The [mental health](#) [2]statement also received inputs from various stakeholders and was finalized with the following recommendations:

- Adopt the framework and prioritize the proposed indicators, targets and milestones for national surveillance and monitoring purposes.
- Adopt a whole-of-society and multisectoral approach to addressing mental health's social and cultural determinants.
- Increase financing, including through integration with other health conditions and comorbidities and in Universal Health Coverage packages.
- Ensure meaningful involvement of people living with mental health conditions and their caregivers, upholding their right to health, participation and dignity.

The ANN will continue to strengthen its involvement and support toward high-level prioritization of the NCD agenda in the region, in strong collaboration with regional CSO networks. They will also continue to support the rights and voices of people living with and at risk of NCDs in Africa, as well as the voices of their nation-states, in conjunction with the global NCD response agenda and relevant stakeholders.

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Tags: [African region](#) [3]

[mental health and neurological disorders](#) [4]

Tag feed: [regional and national advocacy](#) [5]

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[1] <https://ncdalliance.org/why-ncds/NCDs>

[2] <https://ncdalliance.org/why-ncds/ncds/mental-health-and-neurological-disorders>

[3] <https://old.ncdalliance.org/taxonomy/term/246>

[4] <https://old.ncdalliance.org/taxonomy/term/1445>

[5] <https://old.ncdalliance.org/taxonomy/term/891>