

Global Week for Action 2024 kicks off with a call for leadership ahead of UN HLM on NCDs

Language English



Snehal Nandagawli, Chapter Lead at Blue Circle Diabetes Foundation, person living with NCDs

This week saw the launch of the NCD Alliance's 2024-2025 campaign for the Global Week for Action on NCDs, which is centred on the theme of leadership.. This theme underscores the urgent need for global leaders to take bold action in addressing the burden of NCDs. The campaign is joined by advocates and supporters from all sectors of society every year to help amplify the message that we can create a fairer and healthier world by implementing evidence-based solutions for tackling NCDs.

"Each year the Global Week for Action on NCDs campaign is testament of a mobilised and strong civil society calling for urgent action. We have the commitments and the solutions to create a healthier world for all. This is a crucial moment for governments and decision-makers to turn intent into action. It's time to lead on reducing the NCD burden globally," said Dr Monika Arora, President of the NCD Alliance.

The launch event will see the unveiling of the campaign's dedicated website, actonncds.org, as the central hub for resources and information. Under the banner of Time to lead, the campaign call on the global NCD movement, and allies, to raise their voices online and in-person in actions big and small: by posting on social media, hosting awareness-raising events, writing to urge their leaders to take action now, and much more.

At least a quarter of the world's population - 1.7 billion people - lives with one or more NCD such as cancer, diabetes, chronic respiratory diseases, and heart disease. 41 million people die every year due to an NCD, accounting for 74% of all deaths worldwide. Annual deaths from NCDs are projected to rise to 52 million by 2030 if this trend is not reversed.

Along with alarming mortality trends, the sheer scale and prevalence of these chronic conditions and their modifiable risk factors represents a public health emergency. Progress on reducing the risk factors which are largely preventable has been inadequate, with the rates of decline of tobacco use, physical inactivity, unhealthy diets and alcohol insufficient to meet the global targets. As a result, the numbers of people living with NCDs worldwide are staggering:

- [1.3 billion](#) [1] people living with hypertension,
- [537 million](#) [2] - diabetes,
- [18 million](#) [3] - cancer,
- [800 million](#) [4] - obesity, and a billion more at risk of developing overweight or obesity, and
- [970 million](#) [5] people living with a mental disorder, to name just a few.

These numbers are likely to be just the tip of the iceberg due to low diagnosis rates in many countries.

The road to the fourth High Level Meeting on NCDs

World leaders will gather at the UN in New York next Year to discuss the global response to NCDs. The United Nations General Assembly, the main decision-making body of the UN representing all 193 Member States and governments, calls a United Nations High-Level Meeting (UN HLM) to focus on specific issues that require global political dialogue. For instance, there have been three UN HLMs on NCDs, and Sept. 2025 will see the fourth UN HLM on NCDs.

Despite some progress, 14 years after the first UNHLM, an unacceptable health equity gap persists for individuals at risk of and living with NCDs. For example, insulin was discovered over 100 years ago, yet only half of those who need it to survive have reliable access to the drug. At a household level, most people in low- and middle-income countries pay out-of-pocket (OOP) for much of their NCD treatment and care. OOP health expenses push roughly 100 million people worldwide into extreme poverty every year. Until the UNHLM, the campaign will be calling on leaders to:

- **ACCELERATE IMPLEMENTATION:** It's time for governments to spark change. Fast-tracking national implementation of NCD policy recommendations will drive progress towards universal health and well-being, ensuring no one is left behind. It's time to lead.
- **BREAK DOWN SILOES:** Together, we can break down the siloes that discourage cooperation to advance global health and development priorities to achieve stronger outcomes that surpass traditional boundaries. Leaders can achieve more through integrated action.
- **MOBILISE INVESTMENT:** Unleash vital funding for NCD prevention and care to align resources with the magnitude of the challenge. World leaders can trigger impactful investment for healthier societies.
- **DELIVER ACCOUNTABILITY:** Keep tabs, measure progress, and honour commitments to NCD prevention and care for the long haul. It's about leaders staying true to their promises, holding themselves accountable, and delivering on commitments to better health for all.
- **ENGAGE COMMUNITIES:** Activate community leadership and put people living with NCDs at the heart of a collaborative response from the global NCD community.

Global NCDA Forum 2024 – The civil society voice calling for action

Coinciding with the Global Week will be the [Global NCD Alliance Forum](#) [6]. Scheduled for Kigali, Rwanda, 20-22 October, the timing of the Forum will mark the one-year countdown to the fourth HLM NCDs.

The Forum will provide the platform for the NCD movement to strategise, coordinate and unite ahead of the UNHLM, to ensure it results in strong outcomes and meaningful change for people at risk and living with NCDs.

Co-hosted by the Rwanda NCD Alliance, in collaboration with the Rwanda Ministry of Health and the Rwanda Biomedical Centre, delegates are invited to Kigali, Rwanda. Dubbed the land of a thousand hills, Rwanda is well known for its beauty, but also as a beacon of progress on health and NCDs within the region and globally, trailblazing renowned Universal Health Coverage reforms.

Taking place over three days from 20 to 22 October, the Forum will feature an official programme alongside a rich agenda of cultural activities and awareness-raising initiatives, including the opportunity to experience Kigali Car Free Day.

Post Date: Thursday, 23 May, 2024

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- Links**
- [1] <https://www.who.int/news/item/19-09-2023-first-who-report-details-devastating-impact-of-hypertension-and-ways-to-stop-it#:~:text=The%20number%20of%20people%20living,currently%20unaware%20of%20their%20condition.>
 - [2] <https://diabetesatlas.org/>
 - [3] <https://www.wcrf.org/cancer-trends/worldwide-cancer-data/>
 - [4] <https://www.worldobesity.org/news/towards-a-global-action-plan-on-obesity-world-obesity-attends-the-150th-who-executive-board#:~:text=Today%2C%20800%20million%20people%20worldwide,aged%205%2D19%20in%202016.>
 - [5] <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-disorders>
 - [6] <https://forum.ncdalliance.org/>
 - [7] <https://old.ncdalliance.org/taxonomy/term/1620>
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