

Too tentative: The Political Declaration of HLM4 must go further, says WHO Civil Society Working Group

Language English



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The draft Political Declaration of the upcoming 4th UN High-Level Meeting on NCDs and Mental Health (HLM4) is too timid in addressing noncommunicable diseases and, in some areas, doesn't even meet the pledges made at the last HLM, declare 30 members of the WHO Civil Society Working Group on NCDs writing in the *British Medical Journal*.

"We cannot afford a High-Level Meeting that recognises problems but falls short on solutions," says the article, titled [The United Nations Political Declaration on Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health Needs a Just and Action Driven Approach](#) [1]. "Global leaders must match their words with action, and seize this opportunity to enshrine justice, accountability, and equity at the heart of the global response to NCDs and mental health conditions," write the authors, who include NCD Alliance Policy and Advocacy Director Alison Cox.

The draft Political Declaration must state the obvious: NCDs are the leading cause of morbidity, mortality, and disability worldwide, write the Working Group. It should discard the ineffective siloed approach to diseases and risk factors and replace it with people-centred approaches that include multiple sectors and stakeholders. Mechanisms to deliver meaningful social participation, challenge commercial practices, and address poorly prepared health systems that perpetuate health inequities must be included, as in previous declarations.

"Our collective conclusion is clear. The Political Declaration must go further if it is to confront the urgency, scale of action, and accountability needed to stem the rising burden of NCDs and mental health conditions," says the article.

The HLM4 is scheduled for 25 September at the UN General Assembly. NCDA's Time to Lead campaign makes five priority asks for the Meeting—Accelerate implementation, Mobilise investment, Break down siloes, Deliver accountability, and Engage communities.

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Published on NCD Alliance (<https://old.ncdalliance.org>)

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[1] <http://www.bmj.com/content/390/bmj.r1331>

[2] <http://actonncds.org>

[3] <https://old.ncdalliance.org/taxonomy/term/1651>

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