

## UNGA72: Summary of the week

Language English

Sir George Alleyne (PAHO/NCDA), Etienne Krug (WHO), Charlotte Ersboll (UN Global Compact), Olga Kjørven (EAT Foundation), Kelly Larson (Bloomberg Philanthropies), Katja Iversen (Women Deliver). © Jonathan Nesteruk / NCD Alliance

The 72nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) opened in New York on Tuesday 19 September with the general debate, where heads of state and government delivered speeches outlining their visions for sustainable development and international cooperation. Recurring themes included prevention of conflicts before they break out, support for UN peacekeeping, sustainable development, and respect for human rights and gender equality.

In his first UNGA as WHO Director-General, Dr Tedros participated in many events, highlighting the importance of implementing universal health coverage as a requirement for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and a component of ensuring global health security.

Dr Tedros spoke about the need to engage ministers of finance in NCD prevention and control and their role in addressing the commercial determinants of health by implementing taxes on health-harming products such as tobacco, alcohol, and sugary drinks. He also highlighted the importance of trade dynamics, food supplies, and pricing as important aspects of the NCD response.

In addition to the general debate, the high-level week consisted of numerous side events and meetings, many of which were health and NCD-focused. The week provided an opportunity for the NCD and health community to meet with partners in the development sector and help strengthen the case for building partnerships and working across sectors.

### Side events during UNGA

On Monday 17 September, the NCD Alliance hosted a side event entitled *Breaking Down Silos, Building Synergies: Implementing NCDs in the SDG Era*. The event, moderated by Sir George Alleyne, discussed the interlinkages

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between health and NCDs with other sustainable development priorities such as nutrition, gender, and the environment, and the multisectoral and multistakeholder actions required for successful NCD prevention and control.

The WHO and the Government of Denmark hosted a side event where WHO launched the [2017 NCD Progress Monitor](#) [1]. It revealed that progress is severely lagging if we are to achieve our goals of reducing the burden of premature mortality due to NCDs and improving the health and wellbeing of all.

The [NCD Coalition for Access to NCD Medicines and Products](#) [2] was also launched during the UNGA. The Coalition, of which the NCD Alliance is a member, is led by PATH and brings together governments, the private sector, philanthropic and academic institutions, and NGOs to address barriers countries face in procuring, supplying and distributing essential medicines and technologies, and ensuring they are used effectively.

The EAT Foundation launched the food and land use coalition, while Women Deliver hosted an event to formally 'pass the baton' from Denmark to Canada as they prepare for their conference in 2019. NCD Child hosted a lunchtime event focused on creating healthy environments for children and adolescents to help address NCDs, and featured a powerful speech from a youth advocate, Ms Cajsa Lindberg, who is living with diabetes and has fought cancer.

The week ended with the Healthy Caribbean Coalition hosting an event on addressing childhood obesity where several countries, including Canada, Barbados, Trinidad & Tobago, Jamaica and Grenada highlighted the various successes and challenges their countries have had in implementing NCD prevention and control policies, and reiterated Caribbean leaders' commitment to fighting NCDs.

Other events focused on global health security, the changing landscape of financing for global health and means of achieving universal health coverage.

**Post Date:** Thursday, 28 September, 2017

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### Links

[1] <http://who.int/nmh/publications/ncd-progress-monitor-2017/en/>

[2] <http://www.path.org/news/press-room/841/>

[3] <https://old.ncdalliance.org/taxonomy/term/593>