



## **Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the UN**

### **Geneva**

### **WHO EXECUTIVE BOARD 148<sup>th</sup> Session (virtual)** (18-26 January, 2021)

*Agenda item 6: Political declaration of the third high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases*

**Mr. Chairman,**

Pakistan welcomes the Secretariat report for the third high level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs). NCDs have overtaken infectious diseases as the world's leading cause of morbidity and mortality, a "paradigm shift" that calls for, across-the-board changes in the working parameters of public health. For these reasons, NCDs have been included as a target in the Sustainable Development Goal 3 (Target 3.4: by 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from NCDs through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being).

**Mr. Chairman,**

As part of the efforts to address the rising burden of Non-Communicable Diseases, we are pleased to inform that Pakistan has become the first country in the world to develop a Costed Benefit Package for Essential Health Services (EPHS) as a part of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) whilst adopting global best practices with localized evidence. Achievement of this milestone and implementation of the package in the future will help the country improve health outcomes and make speedy progress towards UHC. This EPHS integrates NCD related health interventions at all five levels of health service delivery.

**Mr. Chairman,**

The Government has introduced the 'Sehat Sahulat Program' with the aim to improve access of the vulnerable/ poorest segments of the population to good quality medical services, through a health insurance scheme. The scheme provides health cover to a target of 14 million families who are extended financial

protection against catastrophic expenditure that they may incur due to cancer, cardiac, burn and/or renal problems. The health cover is for indoor services and procedures. Moreover, in alignment of the World Health Organization global action plan, the development of National Action Plan is in process entailing the strategic vision and suggested action plans to strengthen the NCD and MH services in Pakistan.

As a signatory to the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), Pakistan is fulfilling its international commitments by taking demand and supply reduction measures. New pictorial health warnings have been issued for cigarette packs and the size of new warning has been increased from 50% to 60% of the outside of the cigarette packs. Development of National Tobacco Control Policy Framework is also in process that is designed to provide a policy framework leading to reduction in the prevalence of tobacco use in Pakistan.

**Mr. Chairman,**

We feel that inconsistent political commitment, lack of risk factors surveillance, disintegrated health services delivery mechanisms, least prioritization of NCDs in information system and high out of pocket spending are the major health system bottle necks in developing countries. A whole-of-government approach is imperative. NCD goals need to be part of development and inter-sectoral planning processes, with strong coordination across multiple intersectoral areas. Enhanced interest and investment by donors and partners can certainly serve as a catalyst.

I thank you all.

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