WHO estimates that 1.1 billion young people\(^1\) worldwide could be at risk of hearing loss due to unsafe listening practices (http://www.who.int/pbd/deafness/activities/MLS/en/). The current trend of regularly listening to music at high volume and for long duration poses a serious threat to one’s hearing. Hearing loss due to loud sounds can be prevented through certain simple practices, such as keeping the volume within safe listening levels and limiting the time spent engaged in noisy activities. While prevention of hearing loss through safe listening practices is the responsibility of the individual, the onus of raising awareness and creating an environment for safe listening lies with the community, manufacturers of devices, governments, and other stakeholders.

Taking cognisance of these facts, WHO launched the Make Listening Safe initiative in 2015, with the overall vision to ensure that people of all ages can enjoy listening with full protection of their hearing.

The aim of this initiative is to reduce the risk of hearing loss posed by unsafe listening behaviour and its specific objectives are to:

- Create a global partnership to promote safe listening.
- Develop and promote, in partnership with other stakeholders, standards for safe listening devices.
- Initiate actions to promote safe listening through the use of technology.
- Develop a comprehensive health communication strategy to promote safe listening.
- Develop a standardized approach to research in the field of hearing loss due to recreational exposure.

\(^1\) Young people refers to persons between the ages of 12-35 years
The initiative is broadly focussed on the following areas:

- Developing standards for safe listening devices in collaboration with ITU
- Safe listening software application
- Health communication
- Risk assessment and definitions
- Standardized protocol for assessment of recreational NIHL

WHO has adopted a consultative approach in the development of this initiative. A stakeholders consultation was held on 1 October 2015, followed by an expert group meeting on 2 October 2015. Since then, WHO has constituted working groups to look at each of the areas of work mentioned above. The groups provide technical inputs and guidance to the development of this initiative.

**It is proposed to hold a strategic planning meeting with members of the expert groups and other stakeholders, with the objectives to:**

1. Review the progress made in the different areas of work.
2. Agree on the components of the health communication strategy.
3. Review the contents of the screening protocol.
4. Discuss testing, finalization and dissemination of the safe listening app.
5. Determine next steps.

The expected outcomes of the meeting are as below:

1. All participants are made aware of the progress made in the initiative.
2. Next steps for the different areas of work in the Make Listening Safe initiative are determined.

Participants:

- Experts in the field of audiology, otology, public health, epidemiology, acoustics, sound engineering, who are members of the Make listening Safe working groups.
- ITU
• Other standardization organizations such as CENELEC, IEC and ISO.
• Consumer organizations
• User groups

Dates: 6-7 March 2017

Venue: WHO headquarters, Geneva, Switzerland