

Global Coalition on Oral Health

From pledge to action on UHC for oral health

Concept note

Background

Oral diseases affect close to 3.7 billion people worldwide, with a disproportionate impact on poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals. These conditions combined have an estimated global prevalence of 47%, which is higher than the prevalence of any other noncommunicable disease (NCD). Global cases of oral diseases have increased by one billion over the last 30 years showing that in most countries people do not have access to essential oral health care.

In recent years, there has been a renewed momentum around the global oral health agenda with a World Health Assembly resolution on oral health (WHA74.5) adopted in 2021, a Global strategy on oral health (WHA75(11)) adopted in 2022 and then a Global oral health action plan 2023–2030 (WHA76 (9)) in 2023. The resolution and following policy documents affirm that oral health should be embedded within the NCD agenda and that oral health care interventions should be included in national universal health coverage (UHC) benefit packages. Combined these policy documents set the global oral health agenda and are ready for adaptation and implementation in countries.

Rationale

According to the [Bangkok Declaration – No Health Without Oral Health](#), the aim of the Global Coalition on Oral Health is to support the efforts of WHO in developing a comprehensive and cohesive approach among Member States, UN agencies and non-State actors, including nongovernmental organizations, academic and research institutions, philanthropic foundations and private sector entities, to conduct action oriented and effective advocacy towards achieving UHC for oral health in countries.

The Global Coalition on Oral Health is a WHO convened forum focused on accelerating implementation of the [Global Oral Health Action Plan 2023–2030 \(GOHAP\)](#) through key principles:

1. Knowledge sharing: Exchange of ideas, information and views between members. This helps in monitoring progress, identifying gaps and informing stakeholders around a shared global agenda.
2. Coordination: Coordinate efforts to avoid duplication and ensure that initiatives are complementary. This involves aligning strategies and actions across different sectors and organizations to maximize impact and efficiency.
3. Collaboration: Strengthen partnerships among diverse stakeholders' members of the coalition to mobilize resources, expertise, and best practices. This collaborative approach can enhance the effectiveness of oral health initiatives and ensure a unified effort towards the vision of the GOHAP.

4. **Advocacy:** Advocate for prioritization and better integration of oral health into broader health agendas (NCD and UHC) at national and international levels. This includes raising awareness about the importance of oral health and rallying key stakeholders to join the Global Coalition on Oral Health.

Objectives

The two objectives of the Global Coalition on Oral Health are: 1) to provide a forum for communication, coordination, and partnership among stakeholders, and 2) support key actions towards implementation of the GOHAP, as requested by countries such as:

- Facilitate knowledge-sharing and capacity-strengthening with countries.
- Promote country and partner coordination.
- Organize meetings and webinars to review progress made on commitments.
- Intensify cross-cutting, inter- and multidisciplinary approaches with other NCDs and sectors. Mobilizing resources for essential oral health care.
- Support implementation of cost-effective interventions, operational research and advocacy events, among other activities.

Meetings

The Global Coalition on Oral Health will hold at least one hybrid or online meeting each calendar year. The Global Coalition on Oral Health may also hold additional ad hoc meetings, as necessary and as appropriate.

Outside of the scheduled meetings, a communication platform hosted by WHO and dedicated to the Global Coalition on Oral Health will be established to facilitate timely communication among members.

Membership

The WHO Secretariat will convene the Member States, UN agencies and non-State actors which are members of the coalition.

- For Member States, membership of the Global Coalition on Oral Health is feasible through the submission of a commitment to implementation of the GOHAP.
- For UN agencies and non-State actors, membership of the Global Coalition on Oral Health is feasible based on the invitation received to attend the WHO Global oral health meeting 26–29 November 2024 in Bangkok.
 - Nevertheless, confirmation of membership to the Global Coalition on Oral health involves joining the call to action – a collective statement on how they plan to contribute to implementation of the GOHAP in countries.
- For other non-State actor entities who would like to join the Global Coalition on Oral Health, these will be managed on a case-by-case basis and will need to go through a due diligence process in line with the [WHO Framework of engagement with non-State actors \(FENSA\)](#) rules.
- Private sector entities, through their affiliation with a Global Business Association invited to attend the WHO Global oral health meeting, are welcome to join the coalition with observer status.

Commitments

Technical commitments as part of the Global Coalition on Oral Health by Member States can be submitted at any time. The coalition's membership will evolve as new commitments are made and the timeframes of existing commitments end. All commitments submitted to WHO will be reviewed, finalized and published on a dedicated WHO webpage. They must be time-bound and include tangible and measurable actions aligned with at least one of the actions of the GOHAP.

Technical commitments from UN agencies and non-State actors (NSAs) will also be feasible in due course.

Financial commitments to WHO will be subject to the [WHO Framework of engagement with non-State actors \(FENSA\)](#) rules, except for funds coming from Member States or those managed by the [WHO Foundation](#) or the [UN Foundation](#).

Call to action for the Global Coalition on Oral Health

The call to action, as a complementary document to the Bangkok Declaration, will serve as a mechanism to operationalize the Global Coalition on Oral Health to commit to undertaking specific actions which are urgently needed to accelerate implementation of the GOHAP. The call to action will outline specific workstreams where key stakeholders have agreed to work together. Preparation and consultation among Member States, UN agencies and non-State actors for the call to action will take place during the first half of 2025.

Role of the WHO Secretariat

WHO serves as the Secretariat of the Global Coalition on Oral Health. The role of the Secretariat is to oversee the day-to-day management of the Global Coalition on Oral Health's work, including coordination of discussions across stakeholders on priorities and gaps, and support for preparations of online meetings and webinars.

Please note, all technical products or conclusions from the webinars will not be recognized as WHO products or recommendations but will remain associated with the Global Coalition on Oral Health.

The Global Coalition on Oral Health is not a decision-making body. The Secretariat reserves the right not to implement any recommendation or activity which it determines gives rise to undue financial, legal or reputational liability or is contrary to WHO policies, regulations and procedures. Members shall not make public statements about the Global Coalition on Oral Health's activities or on behalf of the Secretariat without the prior consent of the Secretariat.