

Third meeting of the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control on COVID-19 and the NCD-related SDGs

Date: 24 April 2020

Participants: Around 20 UN system agencies joined. Interventions were provided by FCTC Secretariat, Global Fund, IDLO, OECD, OHCHR, UNDP, UNEP, UNICEF, UNODC, WHO and the World Bank.

Summary:

1. Update on progress against actions agreed at the last meeting was provided (Annex 1). Task Force members' COVID-19 weblinks are shown in Annex 2.
2. WHO presented initial thinking from the COVID-19/NCD theme group on prevention (emergency period and aftermath), focusing on reinforcing the WHO FCTC, counter industry interference, threats to regulatory frameworks & misinformation in media (attached pdf has the slides presented). The presentation explored four entry points for the prevention of NCDs: (i) campaigns to raise awareness; (ii) emergency orders; (iii) fiscal measures; (iv) and enforcement of laws. Task Force members provided inputs for the theme group to consider, in particular focusing on: (i) premature vs all age mortality; (ii) health taxes – and the link with the SDG3+ financing accelerator; (iii) food security and alternative livelihoods for tobacco growers; (iv) public health messaging; (v) green fiscal stimulus and work at the intersections of air quality; and (vi) linkages with WHO/UNDP NCD investment case work and OECD plans for health and economic impact assessments.
3. UNICEF and WHO presented their joint COVID-19 community-based health care guidance, which includes a module on prevention, and the management of chronic illness (attached pdf includes the slides presented; weblink to be shared when available). Comments received included: (i) the ever-increasing burden on community health workers (CHWs) and the importance of motivation and incentives for existing workers and the consistent need to increase the number of CHWs; (ii) linking with those that UNODC is working with on the prevention of substance abuse; and (iii) and the broader issues of health and human rights.
4. WHO provide an update on the structure and functioning of the WHO COVID-19/NCDs Working Group workstreams (Annex 3 and attached pdf with slides presented). The Task Force Secretariat will represent the Task Force on each of the 8 workstreams in order to: (i) report back to members on progress and products being developed; (ii) identify opportunities for engagement/inputs from individual Task Force members

and act as a conduit for ensuring that the work streams are kept fully abreast of relevant activities among Members; and (iii) work with Members to identify how they may wish to use the work being undertaken. The overall idea is to streamline inputs and activities as much as possible to maximize efficiencies.

5. World Bank suggested that we invite the Lancet NCDI Poverty Commission to participate in a future call as they are working with national NCDI poverty commissions on national responses to COVID-19, including the linkages with COVID-19.

Actions

1. Agencies to continue to share new publications/other outputs as they emerge with Task Force Secretariat.
2. Thematic groups and Joint programmes: Secretariat to get in touch with them to ensure they are including COVID-19 in their activities.
3. Task Force Secretariat to take forward paragraph 4 above.

Next meeting: Friday 1 May 2020

27 April 2020

Annex 1: Update on actions from the second meeting

1. Task Force Secretariat to share latest guidance on hydroxychloroquine for COVID-19 with members as soon as possible (in response to a specific request from UNFPA). Task Force Secretariat to determine if there are messages being issued from WHO on association between air pollution/other forms of pollution, and COVID-19 (in response to a specific request from UNEP).	The use of hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine is currently under investigation and is part of the WHO Solidarity clinical trials . WHO is working on a document on the links between air pollution and COVID-19. For WHO's information on Climate Change and COVID-19 please see here .
2. Agencies to shared COVID-specific webpages on their agency websites with Task Force Secretariat.	Actioned. See Annex 2.
3. Agencies to share new publications/other outputs as they emerge with Task Force Secretariat for sharing with the WHO COVID-19/NCDs Working Group and with other members of the Task Force.	Agencies to share this as soon as possible
4. Task Force Secretariat to work with WHO COVID-19/NCDs Working Group to agree how best to get Task Force/UN agency inputs in the teams/work of the Working Group and also how to disseminate the work of the Working Groups to Task Force members.	<p>Following internal discussions our suggested approach is the Task Force Secretariat joins each of the theme group and the reports back to members on: (i) progress and products being developed; (ii) opportunities for engagement/inputs from individual Task Force members; (iii) ways that Members might wish to use the work being undertaken. The Secretariat would also act as a conduit ensuring that the Work streams are kept fully abreast of relevant activities among Members. The overall idea is to streamline inputs and activities as much as possible to maximize efficiencies.</p> <p>For the list of workstreams and areas of activities see Annex 3.</p>
5. Agencies to encourage their focal points on the Mental Health & Psychosocial Support (MHPHS) Network to advocate for attention on mental health during COVID-19.	In progress
6. Agencies wanting to join forces on the WHO-UNDP investment cases that are aiming to be more COVID-19 informed or on the health tax work to let UNDP or the Task Force Secretariat know of their interest.	In progress
7. UN NCD Task Force Thematic groups and Joint programmes: Secretariat to get in touch with them to ensure they are including COVID-19 in their activities.	In progress

Annex 2: COVID-19 related website of UNIATF members

Agency	Covid-19 related website	Themes
UNDP	https://airtable.com/shr2xNxlG BXK5oWDb/tblwPhDJfiisTMNg6?blocks=hide . https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/coronavirus.html	Supporting health systems, procurement of supplies, crisis management
WFP	https://www.wfp.org/emergencies/covid-19-pandemic	Impact on nutrition, on the poor and on food security
ILO	https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/coronavirus/lang--en/index.htm	Impact on businesses and jobs
World Bank	https://www.worldbank.org/en/who-we-are/news/coronavirus-covid19	MDTF to support immediate health measures and later recovery
UNFPA	https://www.unfpa.org/covid19	Access to family planning; protect girls from violence
UNEP	https://www.unenvironment.org/covid-19-updates	Medical waste management, illegal trade in wildlife
UNHCR	https://www.unhcr.org/coronavirus-covid-19.html	Protecting refugees from covid and its consequences
UNAIDS	https://www.unaids.org/en/covid19	HIV and covid, avoid stigma, search local solutions
UNSCN	https://www.unscn.org/en/news-events/recent-news?idnews=2039	Provides links to other agencies' covid-dedicated websites
OECD	www.oecd.org/coronavirus/en	Data on health systems and policy responses; impact of shutdowns
IAEA	https://humanhealth.iaea.org/hhw/	Webinars for nuclear medicine professionals
UNODC	www.unodc.org/unodc/en/covid-19.html	Crime that exploits the pandemic (cybercrime, money-laundering, gender-based violence)
FAO	http://www.fao.org/2019-ncov/en/	Safeguarding food supply chain; policy measures (food, meat, labour) ; monitors increase in prices of basic foods; advice on how to handle animals and meat
UNICEF	https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/covid-19	Tips for families; protecting children; access to learning ; working parents ; pregnancy and breastfeeding
IARC	https://www.iarc.fr/featured-news/coronavirus-covid-19/	Cancer research, impact of covid on cancer and cancer prevention
WTO	https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/covid19_e/covid19_e.htm	Monitors trade related measures under COVID-19.
IDLO	www.idlo.int/news/policy-statements/statement-director-general-idlo-jan-beagle-rule-law-based-response-covid-19	Rule of law during and after crisis.
ITU	http://mhealth-hub.org/mhealth-solutions-against-covid-19 ; https://aiforgood.itu.int/webinar/	mHealth solutions to managing the outbreak; WHO Health alerts on WhatsApp; series of webinars on different topics
UNESCO	https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse/support	Distant learning solutions
WHO	https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019	Outbreak situation updates, technical and country guidance, campaigns

Annex 3. Workstreams and activities under the WHO COVID-19/NCDs Working Group

	Workstream	Activities
1	Advocacy	Communication strategy, advocacy products, misinformation in the media, and myth busters
2	Governance	Keep NCDs/mental health in national, regional and global response plans during/post-pandemic Funding
3	Prevention	Reinforce FCTC, counter industry interference, threats to regulatory frameworks
4a	Treatment	Add NCD/MH specificity to maintaining essential health services, with practical examples & responding to disease-specific requests
4b	Treatment	Identify & scale-up digital health solutions
4c	Treatment	Collaboration on maintaining access to medicines and supplies
5	Surveillance, health information & research	Identify key epidemiological & research questions (relevant to all workstreams) and commission