

Thematic Working Group on Physical Activity

Terms of Reference

1. The Thematic Working Group on Physical Activity was established by the Task Force at its ninth meeting (9-10 November 2017, Geneva). It brings together Task Force members to pool and align their resources more effectively at global and country level for the promotion of physical activity, based on the Global Action Plan on Physical Activity (GAPPA) 2018-2030.

Background

2. Endorsed by WHO Member States at the World Health Assembly in May 2018, the Global Action Plan on Physical Activity (GAPPA) 2018-2030 seeks to achieve a 15% relative reduction in the global prevalence of physical inactivity in adults and in adolescents by 2030. Regular physical activity is proven to help prevent and treat NCDs, such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and breast and colon cancer. It also helps prevent hypertension, overweight and obesity and can improve mental health, quality of life and well-being. As countries develop economically, levels of physical inactivity increase. In some countries, these levels can be as high as 70%, due to changing transport patterns, increased use of technology, cultural values and urbanization.

3. Given that the agenda of the Action Plan goes beyond the scope of health, implementation requires multisectoral cooperation at national and international levels. By working together to achieve the vision of the Action Plan and improve health for all, partners including UN agencies and the UN Interagency Taskforce on NCDs (UNIATF) can also accelerate progress to achieve their own respective goals. Policy actions on physical activity have multiplicative health, social and economic benefits, and will directly contribute to achieving SDG3 and other NCD-related SDG targets.

Objectives

4. The objectives aligned with the strategic objectives of GAPPA are:

- Support regular national, regional and global promotional campaigns aimed at promoting physical activity and reducing sedentary behavior (SO 1.1).
- Build and strengthen partnerships, between health and transport to improving conditions for walking and cycling and use of public transport (SO 2.2).
- Collaborate to strengthen road safety measures to create safe environments for walking and cycling consistent with Vision Zero (SO 2.3).

- Support sharing of best practice interventions related to GAPPA across all key settings (SO 2.5).
- Support implementation of workplace programmes that promote physical activity and a reduction in sedentary behaviour and increase incidental activity through the work day (SO 3.3).
- Support the design, development and evaluation of programmes to promote physical activity to marginalized, vulnerable and displaced people, in order to strengthen the evidence base on impact (SO 3.5).
- Support implementation of whole of city/community initiatives combining multiple strategies across different settings/ages/abilities to promote opportunities for physical activity.
- Conduct joint advocacy to increase understanding of the policy connections between physical activity as a direct contributor, and as an enabler, to the achievement of the SDGs, as well as a contributor to national economic and development priorities (SO 4.4).

Coordination and ways of working

5. The Thematic Group will be coordinated by Fiona Bull, Programme Manager, Surveillance & Population Based Prevention, Prevention of Noncommunicable Diseases, WHO.
6. Meetings will primarily take place remotely or face to face on occasion of the specific events where most participants were meeting face to face for other purposes. A member of the working group is expected to actively engage and cooperate to jointly implement the priorities and areas of work agreed.
7. Members will agree a plan of work each year.

Members of the Thematic Working Group on Physical Activity

8. The Thematic Working Group on Physical Activity is open for membership of interested UN agencies who are members to the UNIATF by simple expression of interest.
9. Current members of the Group are: WHO, IDLO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC and UNU-IIGH.

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Annex*

Areas where four or more Task Force members are currently working together:

- Community wide awareness campaigns on benefits of PA to health AND the environment, climate change, economy etc.

Areas where three Task Force members are currently working together:

- Improve urban design and transport policy in all cities and communities to support & encourage walking and cycling.
- Accelerate improvements in safety (from road traffic & personal fear of violence) for pedestrians & cyclists of all ages – e.g. implementation and enforcement of Decade of Action on Road Safety recommended strategies.
- Strengthen policy and building design codes and regulations to support PA (buildings, malls, offices, schools, health care etc.).
- Promote positive experiences in PA using health promoting schools approaches – including quality PE agenda.
- Strengthening multisector leadership and governance/national policies and action plans on PA
- Scale PA advocacy to increase awareness, knowledge and engagement in implementation and joint actions.
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* Taken from Annex 3, Summary of the Tenth UNIATF meeting (<https://www.who.int/ncds/un-task-force/events/summary-10th-uniatf-meeting.pdf?ua=1>)