More active people for a healthier world
Geneva, Switzerland, 6-7 December 2023

Meeting Report
1. The World Health Organization held its seventh Dialogue with representatives of sports related industries at WHO headquarters in Geneva on 6-7 December 2023.

2. The objectives of meeting were to

   I. Provide insights WHO global work and priorities for increasing physical activity since the 6th Dialogue
   II. Share current work, lessons learned and future priorities from industry associations on their work aligned with WHO GAPPA and increasing physical activity and reducing inequalities
   III. Discuss progress and next steps for implementation of Phase 2 of the WHO “Let’s Be Active” Register of voluntary commitments towards increasing physical activity
   IV. Explore and discuss how sport industry is currently contributing to the creating a wellbeing society and what opportunities exist
   V. Discuss progress and opportunities to accelerate innovation in digital technologies and tools to promote more participation in physical activity.

3. The programme of the Dialogue is provided in Annex 1 and the list of participants in Annex 2.

SESSION I: WELCOME AND WHO UPDATES

Presentation: Update on WHO activities on WHO’s Global Action Plan on Physical Activity

4. Dr Fiona Bull, Unit Head of Physical Activity welcomed the participants and thanked them for their time to meet with WHO, followed by a welcome and thanks from Dr Ruediger Krech, Director of Health Promotion.

5. WHO provided an introductory briefing on the current levels of physical inactivity and the WHO Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018-2030 (GAPPA). Physical inactivity is a problem in all countries and the latest data on inactivity levels among both adults and adolescents are of great concern for WHO and its Member States. The global inactivity level among adults was 28% (latest global data, published in Oct. 2018), with variations between regions, countries, and within countries. For adolescents (11-17 years), the recent global study published in November 2019 documented that globally, 81% do not meet recommended levels of physical activity. Unfortunately, these data show overall a lack of progress in decreasing physical inactivity in the past 15 years despite strong and well-established evidence that consistently shows the multiple benefits afforded by regular physical activity and its substantial contribution to preventing and treating NCDs and

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1 See full document at https://www.who.int/ncds/prevention/physical-activity/gappa.
2 https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X(18)30357-7/fulltext
3 https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanchi/article/PIIS2352-4642(19)30323-2/fulltext
promoting health and wellbeing. WHO restated its priorities were to increase physical activity in the least active regions and countries, and within countries in the least active populations which were often girls, women, older adults, and people living with chronic diseases and disabilities.

6. WHO highlighted areas of work and achievements noting

- the development of toolkits and related training such as the communications toolkit and the toolkit on promoting physical activity among older people;
- some of the findings of the Global Status Report including slow and even progress on implementation of GAPPA;
- that new global prevalence estimates of physical activity will be available in Q1 of 2024;
- that WHO is deepening its collaborative work with the IOC under an MOU, including an initiative underway to develop a training program and a peer-to-peer learning network, all intended to bring together health and sports for stronger partnerships to reach more people; and
- that a recent convening of experts in surveillance and wearables began a programme of work to review and update the way that population prevalence of physical activity is measured, noting changes in guidelines and increased use of technology.

Discussion

7. Discussion highlighted the following key areas of priority

1) the need for greater consistency in terminology of sport, exercise, fitness and how the terminology influences industry perceptions and even the way the industry works;
2) acknowledgement that sport is evolving and generation participation in all areas of physical activity is changing;
3) communication is important and language matters;
4) opportunity exists for training to be earlier vs later in the industry;
5) high-implementation countries still have high inactivity rates;
6) political will is inadequate to create desired change;
7) more people recognize link with mental health.

SESSION II: INDUSTRY UPDATES

Presentations: Update from the industry associations and perspective from industry representative

World Federation of the Sporting Goods Industry (WFSGI)

8. The representative of WFSGI provided 1) an overview of WFSGI’s new Strategic Plan to 2025 including its purpose to unite and support the global sporting goods industry to ensure a healthier more active planet for all; 2) industry insights suggest decreasing participation and interest in sports and related activities amongst the next generation; 3) an overview of the Physical Activity Committee purpose and commitment; and 4) a deep dive on the federation’s recent work including advocacy,
expanding its work in cycling from technical/equipment based to include cycling for health and mobility, and the MOU with WHO.

Discussion
9. Highlights of discussion included 1) Cycling voice is not heard in road safety and there is opportunity for WFSGI to work with its members and WHO to change this; 2) purpose of cycling varies across countries; 3) communication gap between elite and community and recreational sport undermines the opportunity for collective action on elevating levels of physical activity 4) a united industry can be powerful; 5) other industries such as tourism and transport matter here.

International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association (IHRSA)
10. The representative of IHRSA shared 1) information on the association reach and the industry contribution to GDP (some global and some USA data); 2) industry insights and challenges including growth in participation despite losses in facilities; and 3) IHRSA plans for 2024 include rebranding and repositioning for growth, and specifically the positioning and highlighting of the industry essential role in preventative healthcare.

Discussion
11. Discussion included 1) need for industry research agenda; 2) acknowledging similarities and realize difference in contribution of Industry associations and ways to achieve common goals in order to maximize roles but not duplicate; 3) need for industry data to be verified as much of it relied on “self-report” from clubs and sector; 4) discussion of the role of gyms or clubs as a “third” place after work and home, where people choose to spend their time; 5) gaps exist between the industry and health sectors, for example, the health sector doesn’t respond to exercise and fitness industry and does not recognize its contribution to health and health outcomes.

EuropeActive-THiNKActive
12. The representatives for Europe Active, shared 1) their 2020-2025 Manifesto & Strategy which was updated in 2023; 2) an overview of growth and work areas and strategies including political representation; evidencing research; public relations and unifying events; 3) an overview of the European fitness market and organizational membership and reach; 4) market share, growth opportunities, and industry insights; and 5) THiNKActive research activities.

World Active
13. The representative for World Active, shared 1) membership, purpose, challenges. and solutions; 2) participation data; and 3) noted that gyms and clubs are not explicitly identified in GAPPA.

Discussion
14. Discussion noted that 1) industry needs to motivate engagement among members; 2) be explicit about the role of gyms and clubs; 3) provide some form of recognition; 4) need for strengthening the evidence and data use within the industry and beyond.
SESSION III: THE REGISTER
Presentation on WHO Register of voluntary commitments on physical activity by Dr Fiona Bull, Unit Head

15. WHO provided an update on the status of development of the WHO Register of contributions mandated action from the World Health Assembly, which aims to provide a transparent accountability mechanism for stakeholders to publish and track the voluntary commitments made in support of achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3.4 and specifically GAPPA implementation at global, regional or national levels.

16. WHO presented an updated and approved plan for Phase II of the Let’s Be Active Register including eligibility criteria; potential areas of contribution of contributions, the need and opportunities for entities to collaborate in the submission of a commitment, the role of WHO as secretariat, and brief overview of the planned submission process. Additional details of the areas yet to be determined were discussed, including what form of recognition will be provided by WHO to entities.

Discussion

17. Discussion highlights included recognition that WHO had taken on previous feedback and inputs; ideas of possible commitments were shared and discussed to assess applicability and feasibility. It was noted that industry association members will require sufficient notice to respond, motivation and recognition to be interested in participating, and there was a need for WHO to follow up with communication of Phase II and application materials in writing and for sharing with memberships.

SESSION IV: DISCUSSION FORUM WELLBEING SOCIETY AND WHO WELLBEING FRAMEWORK
Facilitated by Dr Ruediger Krech

18. Dr Krech provided an introduction to WHO wellbeing agenda and outlined that societal wellbeing exceeds that of disease prevention and management, as defined by health promotion and provided examples from communicable diseases; discussed social and commercial determinants of health. The breadth of areas of wellbeing were described and supported by a background paper. Industry was invited to provide examples and discuss how they are and could contribute to building a wellbeing economy.

Discussion

19. Discussion points included: 1) pharma and healthcare industry and sectors are really “sick care” and that greater recognition is needed of the role of physical activity is in prevention; 2) that it is important to avoid ‘whitewashing’ and stating ambitions which are not delivered (example given was on gender equity); 3) consider changing climate initiatives to include health (ESG+health) for accountability; 4) clear indicators and monitoring could demonstrate return on investment and increase investments. Notable conclusions of the discussion was that if the industry wishes to be seen and act as part of the solution it will require: a change in perception of value it contributes to improving health, greater linkages to health sector, an improved image and credibility in the eyes of the health community generate greater trust in industry; a strengthened workforce with necessary capabilities and capacity to contribute to
health and wellbeing, and potentially additional regulation; 6) the benefits of the industry need to be collated and communicated to increase the visibility and value of the industry as a valued area of investment; 7) the industry requires a unified voice to get attention and attraction as per other industry groups/areas.

SESSION 5 DISCUSSIONS ON REGISTER, DIGITAL INNOVATION, AND WAY FORWARD

No presentations. Day two agenda was modified due to extenuating circumstances.

20. Dr Fiona Bull 1) provided a summary of day one discussions and 2) additional details on WHO current work including toolkits, forthcoming new global estimates on levels of physical activity in 2024, a new programme of work to advance the measurement of physical activity including using digital technologies (wearables), 3) an outlined of the work plan under the WHO-IOC collaborations, 4) extended an invitation to all industry sectors to participate in the ISPAH2024 conference to be held in Paris Oct 2024.

21. Additional discussion explored how the industry need to act to develop a more visible profile globally, how to best utilize forthcoming prevalence data, and how to position to be a voice in global fora such as at the WHO World Health Assembly, COP28 etc.

22. Dr Fiona Bull led a follow up discussion on the Let’s Be Active Registry on voluntary commitments where industry presented a variety of initial ideas, and they were assessed for registry fit and feasibility.

23. Dr Fiona Bull led a short discussion on new work and interested of WHO in digital technology and its potential role in improve both measurement and promote behaviour change. Discussion highlights 1) wide range of products highly variable with need for specifications and protocols for surveillance 2) opportunities to engage with big and small fit tech industry via advisory councils

24. Dr Fiona Bull led summarized conversations and 1) industry will coordinate amongst themselves for unified voice; 2) interest in collating the picture of human and physical capital of the industry and its contribution to wellbeing; 3) noting highlighted events and estimates communications will follow; 4) the industry notes the need to invest in data and research.

SESSION V: WHO STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES
Presentation by Natha Somjaivong, External Relations Officer

25. Natha Somjaivong shared the “yet to be finalized” stakeholder strategies, noting that 1) WHO recognizes the contributions of many sectors to public health; 2) there are a variety of ways to engage across sectors; 3) WHO can promote health and SDG attainment via constructive industry engagement that aims to strengthen the positive and reduce the negative impacts of industry.

SESSION VI: Meeting Summary and Closure

26. Dr Fiona Bull provided brief closing remarks and thanked participants for their commitment and contributions to this seventh Dialogue.

NEXT STEPS
1. WHO will 1) convene Dialogue 8 in 2024, tentatively on 12 and 13 December; 2) convene a virtual meeting four-hour meeting during the week of 26 February 2024; and 3) the 9th Dialogue will likely move to June of 2025.

2. WHO will notify participants when the new global prevalence estimates will be available.

3. WHO noted the participants will communicate bilaterally on many issues discussed.

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Annex 1

PROGRAMME

MORE ACTIVE PEOPLE FOR A HEALTHIER WORLD
Seventh WHO Dialogue with sports-related industries on the implementation of the
Global Action Plan on Physical Activity (GAPPA) 2018-2030

WHO headquarters, Geneva, Switzerland
6-7 December 2023

Objectives of the Meeting
1. Provide insights WHO global work and priorities for increasing physical activity since the 6th Dialogue
2. Share current work, lessons learned and future priorities from industry associations on their work aligned with WHO GAPPA and increasing physical activity and reducing inequalities
3. Discuss progress and next steps for implementation of Phase 2 of the WHO “Let’s Be Active” Register of voluntary commitments towards increasing physical activity
4. Explore and discuss how sport industry is currently contributing to the creating a wellbeing society and what opportunities exist
5. Discuss progress and opportunities to accelerate innovation in digital technologies and tools to promote more participation in physical activity.

PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

DAY 1 Wednesday, 6 December 2023

9:00 Arrival and security clearance – allow 30 mins in case security is busy

9:30 Open Meeting and Welcome; Introductions - tour de table
- Dr Ruediger Krech, Director of Health Promotion, WHO
- Dr Fiona Bull, Unit Head, WHO

9:45 Presentation by WHO with Q&A
-Presentation: Dr Fiona Bull, Unit Head Physical Activity, WHO Global progress global challenges on increasing participation in physical activity
-Discussion
10:45  Coffee break

11:00  Industry presentations and Q&A:
      - WFSGI
      - IHRSA

12:30  Lunch

14:00  Industry presentations and Q&A:
      - Europe Active
      - World Active

15:00  Update on WHO Register of voluntary of commitments on physical activity
      - Dr Fiona Bull, Unit Head Physical Activity, WHO

15:45  Break

16:00  DISCUSSION FORUM 1: Wellbeing Society & WHO Wellbeing Framework and priorities
      - Dr Ruediger Krech, Director of Health Promotion, Division of Healthier Populations
      - Discussion on sport industry contribution to wellbeing economy

17:30  Summary of Day 1

DAY 2  Thursday, 7 December 2023

8:30   Security clearance and coffee

9:00   Welcome back
      - Dr Fiona Bull, Unit Head Physical Activity, WHO

9:15   DISCUSSION FORUM 2: Opportunities and scaling digital innovation to promote PA
      - Dr Alain Labrique, Director Department of Digital Health and Innovation
      - WHO Global Strategy on Digital Health 2020-2025
      - Discussion

11:00  Coffee break

11:15  DISCUSSION FORUM 3: WHO Strategy for engagement with private sector
      - Dr Gaudenz Silberschmidt, Director Health and Multilateral Partnerships, External Relations
      - Discussion

12:15  Summary, Close and Thanks

12:30  Informal lunch in WHO cafeteria / Depart
Annex 3

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

7th WHO Dialogues with sports-related industries
on the implementation of the Global Action Plan on Physical Activity (GAPPA) 2018-2030

WHO headquarters, Geneva, Switzerland
6-7 December 2023
D-Building, room D42022

PROVISIONAL LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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