Meeting Report

1. The World Health Organization held its fourth Dialogue with representatives of sports related industries as a virtual meeting using Webex platform on 28 April 2020.

2. The objectives of WHO Dialogues with industry are threefold: 1) share information on the global health agenda and WHO priorities and workplans on promoting physical activity; 2) exchange information on industry directions and developments related to promoting physical activity and develop understanding of the industry’s opportunities and trends; and 3) identify potential areas of common interest and synergy that align with the implementation of recommendations in the Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018-2030 (GAPPA).

3. The objective of this fourth Dialogue with industries related to sports and physical activity was to share the updates from WHO and industry on their work on physical activity and work related to COVID-19 response. For this meeting, due to the circumstances of the impact of COVID-19 response, delegates are limited to core representatives from the Industry Associations.

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

SESSION I: Update from WHO

Welcome

5. Dr Rüdiger Krech, Director for Health Promotion Department, Universal Health Coverage/Healthier Population Division, warmly welcomed the delegates. Physical activity is key to healthier life especially during COVID-19 time to improve mental, social and physical health. Many people are confined to home during this time and the need to be active is very important.

6. Private sector plays an important role to promote physical activity during COVID time and to expand the reach to more individuals. Industry associations along with members provide opportunities for fruitful exchange of experiences. It is important to gather data and share the research findings to explore the need and opportunities in wearable technology.

7. WHO will provide the update to increase physical activity and the contribution from private sector to WHO work and global agenda to increase physical activity is welcomed. This meeting is a new
format with shorter time. However, WHO is delighted to host the 4th dialog and very glad that the delegates are making the time to join the meeting. Contributions are welcomed.

8. Dr. Fiona Bull, Programme Lead from Physical Activity, Department of Health Promotion, welcomed the participants to the meeting and introduction of participants was done. The agenda for the meeting was presented to the participants and suggestions on additional items are welcome. No additional items were added to the agenda.

**Presentation: Update on key programme activities and 2020 priorities and developments of the Pilot Phase of the Global Register**

9. WHO provided the update on the key programme activities and 2020 priorities as below.

10. WHO provided an update to pilot the Global Register. Global Register represents an opportunity to collaborate with private sector, civil society organizations and philanthropies for their voluntary contribution. WHO invited the interested sports and related industries to share their interest and experiences in the open forum (Sport Dialog) and summary notes will be made available for review and will be published on WHO website. The forum is not a platform for formal partnership. However, this is the platform to share and participate to learn from each other and express interest. There are three sessions in the agenda.

11. WHO introduced the team members from Physical Activity Unit. Physical Activity Unit is responsible for three major areas; 1. global leadership on advocacy and partnerships, 2. Global normative and standards, 3. technical support for the member states to assist in the area of policy, programmes and 4. Country capacity building to increase physical activity in context of health and wellbeing. WHO also identify the need at regional and country level for further support.

12. WHO Global Action Plan on Physical Activity (GAPPA) extended its timeline to 2030 for 15% reduction of physical inactivity or, in another word, 15% improvement in physical activity. Toolkits are developed for implementation of WHO GAPPA. WHO GAPPA recommendations provide comprehensive approach through active society, creating active and supportive environments, creating access to opportunities and programmes across multiple settings and creating and strengthening leadership, governance, multisectoral partnership, resources. Single approach is unlikely to be effective. Implementing WHO GAPPA will contribute to the 13 SDG goals directly and indirectly.

13. In the seventy-first World Health Assembly in 2018, WHO Member States requested to update the physical activity guidelines and to report the progress of physical activity in 2020 with the global status report.

14. Physical Activity Guidelines: WHO Member States called to update the 2010 physical activity guideline in 2019. Guideline for very young children (under 5) was published recently. The new guideline was developed in consultation with the Global Guideline Development Group early 2020 and the work is underway. The Global Guideline Development Group convened an extensive face-to-face meeting in February 2020. New guideline will be updating specifically on special population such as pregnant women, people living with disability, with chronic disease such as HIV, hypertension, etc. The guideline includes amount of physical activity needed for those target groups, role of sedentary behavior such as sitting. The new guideline is published online for public
consultation and 240 submissions were received. The guideline is now in the process of updating and editing and expected to launch on 28 October 2020. The launch will be also together with publishing in scientific journals.

15. Global Status Report on Physical Activity: WHO is in the process of developing the Global Status Report on physical activity covering all WHO GAPPA policy recommendations, including but not limited to mass media campaigns, mass participation events, environment to create active places including safe environment, opportunities in schools, governance, financing and surveillance. It is again, highlighted that data on sports participation is a gap. It is acknowledged that at the global level, it is relatively early to cover all GAPPAA 20 policy recommendations. There will be data gaps to present at the report. However, good case studies will be shared as well as the progress made in different areas to get the inspiration. It is expected to be published in 2020 with subject to current COVID situation.

16. Progress on Sports Dialog: WHO updated the progress with sports dialog. WHO drafted 10 priority areas and shared for this meeting covers WHO GAPPAA implementation and many of these focused on digital technology, mobilizing and building strength for partnership.

Discussions

17. Participants discussed that there might be an opportunity to promote physical activity agenda more since critical mass of industry members are asking for support during COVID. WHO highlighted that WHO Director General emphasized physical activity during the press statement. WHO Member States are also requesting for support. However, requests vary on interest.

18. It was discussed that the launch of the WHO Global Status Report on Physical Activity will bring the agenda to higher political level recognizing the changing world and seeing it from a different lens on the way we are active. WHO updated that discussions are underway to framing of the report and utilizing it. Participants agreed that there is a momentum and opportunity.

19. It was updated that there is a momentum on promoting physical activity during COVID time with higher demand. Millions of people are joining for physical education classes daily. It is important to frame the benefit of physical activity not only as physical health but also as mental and social wellbeing. EuropeActive offered to share the WHO guidelines and publications through their network.

20. The importance of data gap during COVID is highlighted and there is a need to collect data in real time. Available data in sport sector that can help WHO to highlight that gap was requested to interested stakeholders.

Global register

21. The draft Global Register was shared, and contributions are welcome. However, it is not for wider distribution. There is a step forward to commence the Global Register under piloting. It was highlighted that general modality of the Global Register has not changed. However, areas of commitment, which align with the WHO GAPPAA, are open for discussion. WHO has a priority to narrowing the disparity (for example, the gap between girls and boys, older and younger, etc). WHO invited the contribution especially on narrowing disparity.
Discussion

22. It was clarified that resources to share with WHO are no longer limited to new resources and where relevant, old resources can be white-labelled and made available to the public. WHO can be arranged a follow up teleconference on detailed discussion on contribution list.

SESSION II: Update from sports-related industry associations

Update from World Federation of the Sporting Goods Industry (WFSGI)

23. The representative form the WFSGI provided that there are 3 areas WFSGI was working on. Physical activity is much bigger focus now because COVID-19 is a significant issue for public. WFSGI was working with members on providing support in COVID-19 context. WFSGI prepared separate program to safely do physical activity at home with WHO. Social tiles were made available to public. Individual member of WFSGI are also supporting the COVID response through different materials available to public free of charge.

24. WFSGI recently joined medical taskforce to establish guidelines for mass participation events in reopening after COVID. WFSGI is also working with WHO on producing guidelines for gyms and finesse especially on swimming pool. It was also noted that aquatic committee is severely affected during COVID time.

25. Other contribution from WFSGI included one of the members proposed to run on sustainable clothing brand later 2020 and a percentage of the profit is planned to contribute COVID-19 respond fund. Non-COVID-19 activities included contribution to best practice case studies conducted by 2 brands from Sports Active Society Group, IOC’s new toolkit on physical activity which will be published soon, participation in teleconference with UNESCO on PE survey at school and Ministry of Education level with possible financial contribution to the UNESCO survey and inclusion of UNESCO in WFSGI webinars, teleconference with Union Cyclist International to develop and share best practice which also could be a potential area of work with WHO.

26. General actions: WFSGI conducted survey on impact of COVID-19 on the members and the results showed that 86% of members were having financial challenges. Members of WFSGI comprise of 70% of global sport industry. Other challenges are also noted such as impact of national regulations in response to COVID-19 on sales. Future investments of any kind in the next 18 months will be limited from 50% of members on CSR related activities depending on the stage of economic recovery. COVID-19 hub was developed by WFSGI and WHO news and statistics were shared on the hub together with guidance from other trusted sources.

27. It is now very fluid situation for the international sport events. Webinar was conducted with 400 participants and it was also opened to non-members to help the situation with risk mitigation and helping with the livelihood of employees. Members contribution: 21 brands, members of WFSGI, donated to either national, global, local in response to COVID-19 fight.

Presentation: Update from International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association (IHRSA)

28. IHRSA shared its mission, vision of association. IHRSA has 33152 members with over 200,000 clubs. There are already closure of some clubs due to financial situation. IHRSA is supporting the WHO BeActive at home. Website, healthclub.com, is public with including American Councils of
Exercise. The website included physical activities for kids. Dr. Oz is primarily US program but available in many countries including broadcasting. It included what clubs are doing to help people at home which are open for free of charge which is in line with WHO guidance.

29. IHRSA main website also provided a page on corona virus with resources which are free for everyone. Forums and webinars are also provided free for public.

30. IHRSA also updated that some clubs closed in mid-March are now re-opening. However, they cannot fully open with social distancing, not opening the swimming pool yet. It was advised that only 8% of the gym can open and clubs are facing difficulties with maintaining the memberships. Different countries have different measures on re-opening depends on the COVID-19 situation.

31. IHRSA expected that there is a potential with increased use of technology and innovation for physical activity in the future. Acceleration of mActive program will be great and IHRSA is interested to contribute. IHRSA is working with WHO in developing guidelines for swimming pool.

32. Get active for all: IHRSA planned a convention in Santiago in March 2020 with 13,000 attendances. The convention was canceled 5 days before the event and had challenges with refund. It is not possible to hold the convention in 2020. It has a major impact on IHRSA and members.

33. Re-opening: IHRSA stated that with the re-opening it is important to mobilize clubs and to be more inclusive. There is an opportunity to do things differently in the future such as credibility and link to health professionals, hospitals since COVID period might extend in the next 18 months.

Presentation: Update from EuropeActive

34. EuropeActive thanked WHO for letting them join the forum. EuropActive provided the background, mission and vision of the organization. EuropeActive is working closely with European institutions and working across different stakeholders, including commercial, non-commercial sectors and national associations, in European region.

35. EuropeActive conducted online roundtable groups every 2 weeks on effective re-opening strategies and re-opening industry in the coming months at regional level with national interest.

36. BeActive Hour will be held in late May 2020 with many partners across Europe to reach out to citizens.

37. EuropeActive updated the projects in close collaboration with European institutions including European Commission funded by European Union. EuropeActive conducted a project on disadvantaged children (refugee children) and received good response form public and civil society. PAHA project is an ongoing project with the support from industry. The project focus is on physical activity for seniors across Europe. Another project conducted by EuropeActive is Let’s Be Active at Home for the confined citizen during COVID-19. Digital platforms were used to reach out to citizens. These projects are not for profit and for public consumption.

38. Other activities: EuropeActive conducted 2 webinars per week inviting the experts from industry. Small and medium size industry can be profited from the knowledge of webinars. EuropeActive is also running European register of exercise professionals, not for profit project. Many exercise professionals across Europe joined the register. Europe zero and Europe Ambassador programmes were also run by EuropeActive showcasing examples of free exercise programs by professionals across Europe. This project is also available in India.

39. Active citizenship is another project by EuropeActive with allocated resources. This project is a priority and will bring the core message of by bringing physically, mentally and socially healthier
communities across Europe. The message will be “it is citizen’s responsibility to be active and empowered by physical activity”. Webinar is conducted and can share the recording with delegates of the Sports Dialog Forum. In early October 2019, the publication named “Fitness arise in 2030” addressing the new decade of industry with a chapter on CSR and linked with 17 UN SDGs, is published. EuropeActive expressed the interest to support WHO work and contribute through the Global Register.

40. WHO provided remark on the regional work between countries together to promote physical activity in Europe. There is a similar initiative in Caribbean region. WHO recognized that these regional initiatives with mutual country support can be promoted to other WHO regions.

Presentation: Update from International Olympic Committee (IOC)

41. IOC updated that there is a strength of connections between sport industry, government, UN agencies and WHO. IOC is working closely with mass gathering colleagues from UN. Regarding re-opening and sporting activities such as football matches, Tokyo 2020 in 2021, authorities are concerned about the stepwise re-opening. IOC updated that IOC is concerned with the impact of COVID infected population on return of activities since the damage to respiratory system caused by COVID and recovery is under research. It is very important to be more careful with the effect of the virus.

42. IOC updated that countries are also taking different actions with some countries keeping their population active with small incentives. It is also updated that COVID-19 is putting restraint on resources on industry. IOC also noted the uncertainty on COVID-19 epidemiology and on vaccine.

43. With very careful planning to get out of COVID-19, IOC updated its public affair and communication work. IOC is very active with stay strong campaign since the beginning of COVID outbreak. IOC brought the solidarity in sporting community, athletes, international community and citizens to stay strong and active. IOC joined the WHO campaign on staying healthy at home.

44. Internationally, IOC brought communities together through Sports for Development and Peace to highlight the relevance of physical activity and sport during and after COVID. 167.5 million people joined the campaign. IOC is in contact with national committees and federations as well as athletes needing support including psychological support.

Discussion

45. It was discussed that research on physical activity during COVID is needed recognizing the new normal with some short, medium and long-term phases.

46. Participants valued the Sports Dialog Forums organized by WHO over the last 2 years as a good platform to share and a good opportunity to collaborate further.

47. WHO appreciated the comments and also noted that expressed the potential to conduct bi-weekly or monthly teleconferences during COVID responses related to sports. WHO will take the convening role with Sport Industry.

Session III: Needs and opportunities on physical activity during COVID-19 in short, medium and long term
48. WHO updated current work in the acute phase of COVID. Information on recommended physical activity during COVID is published on WHO website. Social media tiles are developed and translated to different languages and shared to with WHO regional offices. Other activities such as campaign communications and coordinating with different stakeholders, transmitting Facebook live, participating in webinars and coordinating with sporting communities were also done.

49. WHO Physical Activity Unit is working with WHO EPI-WIN on reaching out to public with timely, accurate and ease to understand information during COVID-19 outbreak.

50. WHO stressed that there is a need to collect data and do research in relation to NCD risk factors due to COVID. Different issues such as rehabilitation of COVID affected patient to physical activities, impact of different policies and tracking those policies in responses to COVID, recovery and longer-term impact of COVID in the future should be researched. WHO stressed the need of convening a research forum. WHO planned provide the convening role and mobilize the partners and this will commence after the approval. WHO updated that communication, guidance and research are 3 important areas WHO is working on.

Discussion

51. Participants discussed that it is important to have synergy and agreed the importance and need of research especially linked to physical activity, mental health and social values during COVID. EuropeActive offered their network for research purpose.

52. WHO provided the potential areas of research and welcomed for suggestions. Participants agreed that it is comprehensive and suggested to prioritize some of the list.

53. EuropeActive initiated research on socio-economic impact of COVID-19 through collaboration with academic partners. The research will be in line with WHO proposed list.

54. WFSGI updated that the organization is not doing research. Nevertheless, WFSGI offered to circulate it to its members once the document is finalized and members can help with research on some areas. Two-member types are identified provide support; specialized brands in cycling and aquatic brands.

55. International Olympic Committee (IOC) updated that IOC is not doing research. However, IOC is working with partners for best practices in different countries. It is acknowledged that a research forum will be useful.

56. Participants highlighted that WHO work on guidance and adaption is valuable for members. Each sport organization updated that they are working closely with national fitness associations and adapted WHO guidance on sports and WHO guidance is helpful to communicate with members and clients.

57. WHO updated that in May 2020, World Health Assembly will be conducted virtually and “walk the talk” programme will be done virtually on Sunday 17 May 2020.

58. EuropeActive discussed that there will be limited audience if only physical health is portrayed in messages. It is suggested to include social and mental health to have broader audience. In Europe, more than 20% of population has club membership which needed to be expanded. The new way of looking at physical activity addressing social factors will reach broader audience and provide better motivation. It was discussed that innovation is needed through self-critical analysis. Current situation is challenging and reopening the industry will require re-thinking of industry focusing on customers. It was updated that European institutions discussed inclusion of citizens and private
sectors to be more active. Projects to inspire commercial and non-commercial partners are considered. For example, specifically designed programs for seniors addressing social health from multiple aspects and they may become members of the clubs later. It was discussed that marketing eco-system on non-traditional way will help the business sustainability.

59. WFSGI provided updates that there is also a shift in focus from elite athletes to general population or grassroot. More focuses had been made on youth and girls with specific programs tailored to be more self-confident providing long-term health benefit. It was discussed that the Global Register is the good place to bring different partners together to focus on population that are not priority before and to lead what WHO guided to see the change. It was suggested to include the COVID related areas to the Global Register. The need to pivoting of sport community work and aligning it to the Global Register was discussed.

60. IOC updated that national federations are the basis to be more active after the Olympic. National Olympic Committee has broad responsibility but depends on country resources, the activities may vary. IOC updated that community level associations will follow the guidance from national federations on mass gathering. IOC developed 2-3 comprehensive documents with detail advice to event holders which will be shared with national federations.

SESSION VII   Meeting summary, next steps and closure

61. WHO summarized that there is a challenge on lack of sport data, but at the same time there is a need to rethink, pivot the efforts in entering to new norms after COVID and it is important to share ambition to maximize the positive outcomes in forthcoming months and years.

62. WHO acknowledged the work done by many sports organization and opportunities to learn and share form sport dialog is recognized and appreciated. It is recommended to include COVID and eco-system in global register and conduct more frequent forum on COVID related activities. WHO will continue to contribute including research agenda and take the convening role.

Next Steps

63. WHO proposed the 8 actions area concluded from this meeting:
   1. Meeting summary to be circulated by WHO
   2. To include the summary of sport sector reaction and response to COVID-19 (a list of what has been done, underway, planned)
   3. Delegates to provide written feedback on the Global Register
   4. To convene regular forum on sport industry on COVID response
   5. To have a forum on guidance adaption on re-opening
   6. To convene a research forum
   7. Coordination of campaign planning to align and give synergy
   8. Opportunity for sport sector to participate virtually such as WHO “Walk the Talk”

Next 5th Sports Dialog

- The 5th dialog with thematic focus on the Sports Dialog is planned on 7-8 December 2020 which will coincide with the Global Status Report on Physical Activity launch. The platform to host either virtual or face-to-face meeting will be announced later depending on COVID situations.
WHO thanked the participants and the meeting was successfully closed.

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Annex 1

PROGRAMME

Annex 3

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Representatives of the sports industry
EuropeActive
Andreas Paulsen
Executive Director
Belgium

International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association (IHRSA)
Kilian Fisher
International Public Policy Advisor
UFIT Global Industry Lead
IHRSA
Ireland

World Federation of the Sporting Goods Industry (WFSGI)
Emma P. Mason
Vice President, Strategic and External Affairs
WFSGI
Switzerland

International Olympic Committee (IOC)
Katia Mascagni (TBC)
Head of Relations with International Organisations,
Public Affairs and Advocacy
Switzerland

World Health Organization
Dr Fiona Bull
Programme Lead, Physical Activity
Department of Health Promotion
Universal Health Coverage/Healthier Populations Division

Dr May Myat Cho
Consultant, Physical Activity
Department of Health Promotion
Universal Health Coverage/Healthier Populations Division

Dr Rüdiger Krech
Director
Health Promotion Department
Universal Health Coverage/Healthier Populations Division

Ulrike Schwerdtfeger
Technical Officer (Legal), Physical Activity
Department of Health Promotion
Universal Health Coverage/Healthier Populations Division

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