

Speech of the Deputy Director-General, World Health Organization, to mark the Department of Health and Social Care, England's receipt of the award

10 March 2021

Good morning Secretary of State

I am delighted to hand over an award from the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases to the Department of Health and Social Care today on the UK's 'No Smoking Day'.

You will be aware that the WHO Director-General Dr Tedros announced this award during the 'Friends of the Task Force' meeting in the margins on the UN General Assembly last year on the 24th September. Task Force awards are given to honour demonstrative commitment to multisectoral action in preventing and controlling the NCD-related SDGs.

The Task Force award is being given to the Department of Health and Social Care, England. Adriana, the Head of the FCTC Secretariat here in Geneva will say more about the FCTC2030 project in just a moment but as around 40 UN system agencies are part of the Task Force you can be sure that there is widespread recognition of the support that DHSC has provided to FCTC2030.

We were very grateful to have Jenny Harries, one of your Deputy Chief Medical Officers join the 'Friends of the Task Force' meeting last September. The meeting highlighted the importance of scaling up action on NCDs and mental health across the world – especially in low- and middle-income countries, and in particular the impact that the pandemic is having on those with NCDs and mental health conditions.

We were grateful to Dr Harries' for speaking in support of the work of the Task Force, recognizing the importance of joined-up programming across a network of multi-lateral organizations in order to tackle multisectoral determinants. She also highlighted the new UN multi-partner trust fund for NCDs and mental health as a source of international financing, to enable low and middle-income countries to catalyze domestic action on NCDs.

The Task Force has had a strong relationship with the UK over the last few years through Public Health England. PHE staff have joined UN-led joint programming missions to the Philippines and Nigeria and taken forward action in those and other countries to implement recommendations from such missions. I would also like to express my thanks to PHE colleagues for their involvement in the Task Force publication on NCDs and COVID-19 that was launched by Dr Tedros last year.

We look forward to our ongoing collaboration in the months and years ahead.

Let me now hand over to Adriana.

