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The World Health Organization (WHO) presents its compliments to Member States and Associate Members, and has the honour to inform them that in order to support governments to meet the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, in particular, Sustainable Development Goal Target 3.4 (by 2030 reduce by one-third premature mortality from noncommunicable diseases through prevention and treatment, and promote mental health and well-being), WHO, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have established the United Nations' first ever Multi-Partner Trust Fund dedicated to supporting Member States to tackle noncommunicable diseases and mental health conditions,¹ in line with recent resolutions, decisions, declarations and reports.²

Noncommunicable diseases now cause 3 out of 4 deaths globally, with low- and middle-income countries disproportionately affected. More than one in three of the deaths due to noncommunicable diseases are premature and largely preventable, yet noncommunicable diseases remain overwhelmingly neglected. Hundreds of millions of people worldwide suffer immensely from noncommunicable diseases and mental health conditions, yet their needs remain largely unaddressed, impacting the functioning and well-being of their communities. Poor, vulnerable and marginalized populations are the worst affected, with noncommunicable diseases and mental health conditions trapping them in poverty and reinforcing inequalities.

Noncommunicable diseases and mental health conditions are having a significant adverse impact on economies and threaten collective efforts to meet the SDGs. Only 17 countries are on track to meet target 3.4.

The purpose of the Multi-Partner Trust Fund is to catalyse action in low- and middle-income countries in order to strengthen their responses to noncommunicable diseases and mental health conditions in the following areas:

- development and implementation of fiscal, legislative, and regulatory measures;
- health systems, as part of broader efforts towards universal health coverage;
- domestic financing; and
- engagement with communities and affected populations.

The Multi-Partner Trust Fund is being established during the COVID-19 pandemic because: (i) those with mental health conditions (and at risk of these conditions) and those with

¹ The Memorandum of Understanding is available [here](#) and the Terms of Reference are available [here](#).

² These include: (i) E/2021/L35 (resolution adopted by the ECOSOC on the work of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases); (ii) WHA72/REC/1, decision 11 (paragraph j); (iii) Resolution A/RES/73/2 (2018 Political declaration of the Third High-Level Meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases (paragraph 48)); and (iv) the final report of the WHO Independent High-level Commission on Noncommunicable Diseases (recommendation 8).

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noncommunicable diseases (and with risk factors for noncommunicable diseases) are more susceptible to COVID-19 infection and are more likely to experience poor outcomes; (ii) the pandemic has resulted in severe disruptions to diagnostic, treatment, rehabilitation and palliation services for people living with, or at risk of, noncommunicable diseases and mental health conditions, and this is expected to continue for the foreseeable future; and (iii) COVID-19 is going to make it even more challenging to meet the noncommunicable diseases-related SDG targets.

The Multi-Partner Trust Fund aims to raise US\$ 250 million over 5 years, to support country-led catalytic action on noncommunicable diseases and mental health conditions in low- and middle-income countries.

This funding will catalyse action that between now and 2030 will lead to:

- 8 million lives saved;
- 80 million healthy life years gained;
- US\$ 350 billion of economic benefits for low- and middle-income countries; and
- countries building back better in their response to COVID-19.

WHO, UNDP and UNICEF are now looking for partners to shape the way that the Multi-Partner Trust Fund operates, is governed, and is resourced in order to be able to deliver on its objectives.

WHO invites Member States interested in partnering with the Multi-Partner Trust Fund to express their interest by sending an email to unncdtaskforce@who.int. The same address can be used to obtain any further details that may be required.

The World Health Organization takes this opportunity to renew to Member States and Associate Members the assurance of its highest consideration.

GENEVA, 18 August 2021