



Annual Report 2020

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We help low-resource countries to tackle today's most significant global health challenge: premature death, sickness, disability and the associated social and economic impacts from non-communicable diseases. The Defeat-NCD Partnership includes governments, multilateral agencies, civil society, academia, philanthropies and the private sector.

SUMMARY

The COVID-19 pandemic has defined 2020. Both the virus itself, and actions taken in response to it, have impacted the lives of people living with non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

The deadly interplay between COVID-19 and NCDs was observed early in the pandemic: people with NCDs are more likely to be severely affected by COVID-19 or die from it. Lockdowns disrupted the regular care often required by patients with NCDs.

The Defeat-NCD Partnership was among the first organisations to strongly advocate, at the World Health Summit, in national workshops, and opinion pieces placed in key media outlets, that successfully limiting the COVID-19 pandemic required addressing underlying NCD morbidity. An integrated approach to screen and provide access to healthcare for previously unknown NCD patients will enable a reduction in COVID-19 fatalities.



"I urge international financial institutions to support the strengthening of health systems and call for investment in The Defeat-NCD Partnership's practical approach that will tackle NCDs and COVID-19 simultaneously."

Timothy Sylvester Harris, Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis, Chair of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Council for Health and Social Development (COHSOD), and Chair of The Defeat-NCD Partnership's High-Level Council, addressing the World Health Summit

Despite the travel restrictions necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic, The Defeat-NCD Partnership mobilised resources and provided technical assistance to the ministries of health in Rwanda and Myanmar. This resulted in the development of a national costed operational plan for Myanmar (2021-2022), and a national strategy and costed action plan for Rwanda (2020-2025), both focused on prevention and control of NCDs. Effective execution of the Myanmar plan will ensure 11 million people benefit from NCD care, and full delivery of the Rwanda plan will reduce premature mortality from NCDs by 25 percent.

To ensure successful implementation of these plans, The Defeat-NCD Partnership has started to successfully mobilise funds for the Governments of Myanmar and Rwanda in order to bridge the fiscal gap. The respective ministers presented and launched their costed operational plans and strategies during a high-level panel

discussion at the World Health Summit on 26 October 2020. With 469 participants, including ministers of health from some of the 2021 scale-up countries, representatives from the World Health Organization, international financing institutions, universities, and donors, the panel discussion was the highest attended session at this year's World Health Summit.

Following the progress made on national capacity building in Rwanda and Myanmar, The Defeat-NCD Partnership engaged ministries of health in Bhutan, Ecuador, Gambia, Nepal, several states within India, and countries across the Caribbean region. The Defeat-NCD Partnership has recruited specialists to support these scale up geographies in 2021 with technical assistance across the four strategic pillars of work, including the development of programme country NCD strategies and costed action plans.

Presented here are some highlights of achievements from 2020, organised under The Defeat-NCD Partnership's four interconnected pillars of action.

NATIONAL NCD CAPACITY BUILDING

The Defeat-NCD Partnership provided technical assistance to two programme countries in 2020, resulting in the development of a national costed operational plan for Myanmar covering 2021 and 2022, and a national strategy and costed action plan for Rwanda for 2020 to 2025. In each of these two countries, dedicated programme coordinators, public health specialists, and health economists delivered essential technical assistance to the ministries of health to convene a multisectoral approach and provide the necessary financial modelling.

Myanmar's two-year plan aims to support 11 million people in 2021 and 2022, with a focus on screening and treatment for five NCDs in particular: cardiovascular diseases (CVDs), chronic respiratory diseases (CRDs), diabetes, cancer and mental health. Two million vulnerable people will benefit from NCD care free-of-charge, and overall delivery of the plan is expected to reduce out-of-pocket (OOP) expenses from the current level of 82 percent down to 63 percent. Myanmar is now seeking US\$ 101 million to implement its plan, with US\$ 76 million to be generated from domestic revenue and US\$ 25 million expected in international aid.

The development of a costed plan has equipped Myanmar with a defined list of projects and related targets, providing a pathway to engage with international donors. The Defeat-NCD Partnership supported the development of proposals and mobilisation of US\$ 1.76 million from partners including the George Institute for Global Health, World Diabetes Foundation, and Novo Nordisk, for the implementation of specific components of the costed action plan. Other implementing partners have mobilised an additional US\$ 2.5 million towards the costed action plan from the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, and the European Commission. The Government of Myanmar has engaged in discussions with the World Bank, and the Asian Development Bank

(ADB) to provide some US\$ 12 million towards the financing gap in the costed action plan to be funded by international development assistance.



"If action is not taken now in Myanmar, a major chunk of the country's health budget will be consumed by NCDs in five to 10 years' time."

Myint Htwe, Union Minister for Health and Sports, Myanmar, launching the national costed action plan at the World Health Summit

Rwanda's five-year plan focuses on CVDs, CRDs, diabetes and cancer, the country's four major NCD killers, in addition to injuries and disabilities. Successful delivery of the plan will directly benefit 4.8 million people and reduce premature mortality from NCDs in Rwanda by 25 percent. The plan outlines four strategic objectives and the identified interventions required to achieve these are projected to cost US\$ 376.2 million. This will require a shift in financing as national budget allocation for NCDs in Rwanda is limited and not proportional with the burden faced.

The Defeat-NCD Partnership supported the development of proposals and mobilisation of US\$1.52 million from the World Diabetes Foundation for the implementation of specific initiatives against Rwanda's costed action plan. The Government of Rwanda, supported by The Defeat-NCD Partnership and others, has developed a proposal towards Rwanda's costed action plan for US\$ 4 million of World Bank funding to be approved in the first quarter of 2021.

"There is a need to reverse the NCD trend in Rwanda. I ask for continued support from The Defeat-NCD Partnership and others to help achieve the goals set in our national costed action plan."

Daniel Ngamije, Minister of Health, Rwanda, launching the national costed action plan and strategy at the World Health Summit



Across both plans for Myanmar and Rwanda are prevention and control interventions that align with The Defeat-NCD Partnership's other action pillars: scaling up NCD services at community level (Pillar 2), improving access and affordability of essential NCD supplies (Pillar 3) and sustainable financing (Pillar

4). Some examples include: the provision of medicine and public health services supported by mobile devices; ensuring the continuous availability of essential NCD medicines, supplies and technologies; establishing NCD-related data management and digital systems; and reducing out-of-pocket expenditure for low-income earners by expanding health insurance coverage.

Myanmar's Union Minister of Health and Sports, Myint Htwe, and Rwanda's Minister of Health, Daniel Ngamije, presented their respective countries' operational plans at the World Health Summit in October 2020, as part of a high-level session organised by The Defeat-NCD Partnership. Reflecting the commitment by these two countries to further prioritising NCDs, Myanmar's Ministry of Health upgraded its NCD Unit to a Division, thereby creating the new position of Deputy Director-General (NCDs), and the Rwanda Biomedical Centre appointed a Director to head its NCD Division.

PREPARATIONS FOR SCALING UP IN 2021

The number of Defeat-NCD Partnership personnel assigned to the execution of plans developed in 2020 has increased in the initial programme countries of Myanmar and Rwanda. In particular, The Defeat-NCD Partnership is positioned to continue its support given the emerging humanitarian needs of the people of Myanmar and ensure that ongoing needs for NCD screening, treatment and care are met.

Engagement with potential new scale up programme countries for 2021 was undertaken throughout the second half of 2020, based on identified needs and expressions of interest from the leadership in these countries. Webinars were conducted to discuss details of potential activities that could be planned, and memorandums of understanding (MoUs) were then negotiated with prioritised 2021 scale up programme countries that requested the Partnership's support.

Planning for technical assistance to Bhutan, Ecuador, Gambia, Nepal, several states within India, and countries across the Caribbean region was undertaken during 2020. This work follows The Defeat-NCD Partnership's established operational modality of co-locating experts within respective health ministries and government departments to provide specialist technical assistance.

"All households in Gambia are either directly or indirectly affected by NCDs. The NCD burden is increasing because of an increase in risk factors and having a negative effect upon Gambia's development."

Ahmadou Lamin Samateh, Minister of Health, Gambia, presenting at the World Health Summit



COMMUNITY SCALE-UP OF NCD SERVICES

Outlined within the plans developed by Myanmar and Rwanda are key interventions to scale-up NCD prevention and management within local communities. These involve introducing digital tools and training for NCD screening and treatment, increasing the capacity of primary healthcare facilities for NCD detection and prevention services, and equipping primary healthcare facilities with database systems to monitor patient progress alongside integrating these with national systems. Considerable preparatory work and due diligence for executing these interventions in 2021 and beyond was conducted in 2020.

During 2020, work was also undertaken to identify private sector service providers in each programme country with a focus on digital service provision across all four strategic pillars, including telemedicine providers, clinic and diagnostic centres, fitness and healthy living, supply chain systems, and data-driven oncology treatment platforms. This work will support The Defeat-NCD Partnership's ongoing efforts to explore different ways of attracting private capital and deploying it through innovative financing mechanisms.



"Telehealth has been instrumental in providing NCD care this year, with telemedicine and digital platforms bringing specialist care to people in greatest need, wherever they live."

Gina Agiostratidou, Programme Director of The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust's Type 1 Diabetes Programme, speaking at the World Health Summit

COVID-19 highlighted how NCD prioritisation and resource allocation needs to be included in emergency response plans for other pandemics or wider crises. In Rwanda, The Defeat-NCD Partnership worked with the Ministry of Health to ensure that NCD patients were included as a group prioritised for the COVID-19 vaccine. An integrated approach, addressing COVID-19 alongside screening and care for NCD patients, was advocated by The Defeat-NCD Partnership in webinars with ministries of health in Bhutan, Ecuador, Gambia, and Nepal.

AFFORDABILITY AND ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL NCD SUPPLIES

The Defeat-NCD Partnership undertook analysis to estimate the market size of NCD medicines, diagnostics, medical equipment and supplies across 80 low resource countries. It also studied procurement processes across many of these countries, reviewed their essential medical lists, and examined forecasting practices and policies on prequalification. This research and analysis forms an important component of The Defeat-NCD Partnership's Marketplace, and shall feed into the preparations for its successful launch in 2021. The Marketplace is a service for countries to access fair priced, quality assured NCD supplies.

Further preparatory work included studying country, regional, and institutional practices of pooled procurement, financing, contractual guarantees, demand aggregation, and related specifics of setting up long-term agreements with procurement agents and suppliers.

The Defeat-NCD Partnership's Marketplace will be launched with an initial focus on low-resource countries. The marketplace will also be instrumental in supporting the global objectives of the World Health Organization (WHO) to increase availability and affordability of NCD supplies, including quality-assured insulin, insulin delivery and glucose monitoring devices. In this regard, The Defeat-NCD Partnership has been engaged in the consultations to support WHO's pilot programme for insulin pre-qualification, and the consultations to support WHO's Global Compact for Diabetes.

"The Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) will consider contractual guarantees to manufacturers from the private sector for The Defeat-NCD Partnership's marketplace contracts, allowing access to affordable, quality NCD drugs, diagnostics and medical devices."

Olga Sclovscia, Regional Head in Europe and Central Asia, from MIGA, World Bank Group, speaking at the World Health Summit



SUSTAINABLE FINANCING

Alongside presenting Myanmar's costed operational plan at the World Health Summit, the Union Minister for Health and Sports announced the creation of the Myanmar Defeat-NCD Partnership Fund, a pooled funding facility to accompany the costed plan, and report on its results.

In 2020, The Defeat-NCD Partnership supported the development of proposals and successfully mobilised financial resources to the tune of US\$ 1.76 million and US\$ 1.52 million for Myanmar and Rwanda's respective costed operational plans. Additional financing for these plans has been mobilised by the Governments and implementing partners.

Other financing innovations to support government and private sector collaboration for tackling NCDs were announced at the 2020 World Health Summit. This included a commitment from MIGA to support with contractual guarantees, and support from the International Finance Corporation (IFC) in the development of structured products and social impact bonds to expand NCD care and screening facilities.



“IFC is engaged in leading innovative financing and its work with The Defeat-NCD Partnership on structured products and bonds will ensure increased private capital flows to tackle NCDs.”

Srividya Jagannathan, Global Lead – Lifesciences, IFC, World Bank Group, speaking at the World Health Summit

Blending impact investing, results-based financing, and public-private partnerships, The Defeat-NCD Partnership’s first social impact bond is being designed to be floated in 2021/2022. The aim is to secure needed private capital for bankable NCD projects identified in the costed action plans, and to achieve measurable indicators of universal health coverage for NCDs. The future cost savings created through successful NCD prevention initiatives will enable governments to repay private investors.

The Defeat-NCD Partnership is currently taking steps to minimise the risks usually associated with implementing impact bonds in low resource countries by securing support from leading financial institutions. To facilitate the issuance of a social impact bond focused on NCDs, The Defeat-NCD Partnership is soliciting a long-term agreement with a professional service provider to aid with bond structuring and capital market activities. As future social impact bonds may seek to finance different and unique interventions, an advisor will be available to The Defeat-NCD Partnership in each instance to facilitate their issuances.

The Defeat-NCD Partnership has engaged in consultations with major insurance providers to offer strategic guidance and technical assistance to increase insurance coverage for vulnerable populations in low-resource countries. By increasing mobile penetration rates, customising micro-insurance plans, and potentially creating risk pooling mechanisms, this component of the Partnership’s work focuses on reducing out-of-pocket expenditure on NCDs.

Preliminary research undertaken by The Defeat-NCD Partnership during 2020 has shown evidence of a correlation between COVID-19 case fatalities and underlying NCD mortalities. Further research shows the disproportionate amount of funding allocated to the COVID-19 response over fundamental strengthening of NCD care. The Defeat-NCD Partnership has launched a joint study with the Economist Intelligence Unit to research this issue in further depth and publish findings during 2021. Using statistical methods and data-driven approaches, the study will highlight areas where funding can be spent in a complementary manner to tackle the pandemic in the short-term and NCDs in the long term.

Similarly, The Defeat-NCD Partnership is collaborating with the Indian Institute for Technology Bombay, and the Climate and Clean Air Coalition Secretariat at the United Nations Environment Programme to examine the relationship between NCDs and climate change to advocate for increased funding for NCDs and deployment of cost-effective and comprehensive solutions that can address both of these pressing issues in a complementary manner.

EVENTS

To support Rwanda's COVID-19 efforts to improve critical care and prevent mortality, particularly among patients with pre-existing NCDs, The Defeat-NCD Partnership worked with the Rwanda Biomedical Centre to organise a successful training and knowledge sharing event on 19 and 20 September 2020. Twelve internationally renowned health professionals joined 275 clinicians from Rwanda to exchange information on treatment guidelines and protocols, emerging trends and latest research. The senior practitioners provided practical insights from their own experiences mitigating the direct and indirect effects of COVID-19 in France, India, Switzerland, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

The Defeat-NCD Partnership hosted a high-level panel discussion 'Access to sustainable NCD treatment and care' at the World Health Summit on 26 October. Featuring 22 high level panellists and speakers, representing governments, multilateral institutions, development banks, humanitarian organisations, academia, philanthropic foundations and private companies, and attended by 469 participants, it was the most well-attended of all sessions at the World Health Summit.

Moderated by journalist Juliette Foster, the session highlighted commitments and major developments by key stakeholders related to progress in The Defeat-NCD Partnership's mission and objectives. In addition to the health ministers from Myanmar and Rwanda presenting national strategies and costed action plans, their counterparts from Bhutan, Ecuador and Gambia spoke at the session as 2021 scale up countries. A summary report of the session is available [here](#).

"New international funding patterns that have arisen as a result of COVID-19 should be used to correct historical underinvestment in NCDs."

Bente Mikkelsen, Director of the Department of NCDs, Division of Universal Health Coverage / Communicable and NCDs, WHO headquarters, presenting at the World Health Summit



Country impact WHO and Defeat NCD

Joint work in many countries to start.

WHO will collaborate through three-levels in supporting:

- development of national policies and plans for NCDs
- implementation of primary care package
- strengthening of health services to enabling NCD services including into PHC and UHC

WHO will also help to generate reliable data in countries.

More work is needed to:

- **Improve access to affordable NCD medicines**
- **Innovate through digital health**
- **Promote self care**
- **Partnership at country level**



Defeat-NCD National Response

| Rwanda | Myanmar |
|---|--|
| Capacity building DNCD training frontline health staff on WHO-PEN package | Capacity building (MHS) |
| Technical capacity support to the Ministry of Health | Strategic and operational Planning |
| Technology Digital health systems integration and expansion | Costing preventive and treatment service packages |
| Community scale-up Scale up NCD services and decentralization- PEN package | Research on economic impacts of NCDs |
| | National coordination and governance |
| | Advocacy for domestic NCD financing |
| | Technology Digital health systems integration and expansion |
| | Community scale-up Healthcare workforce pre and in-service training for skill development |
| | Rollout of PEN package |

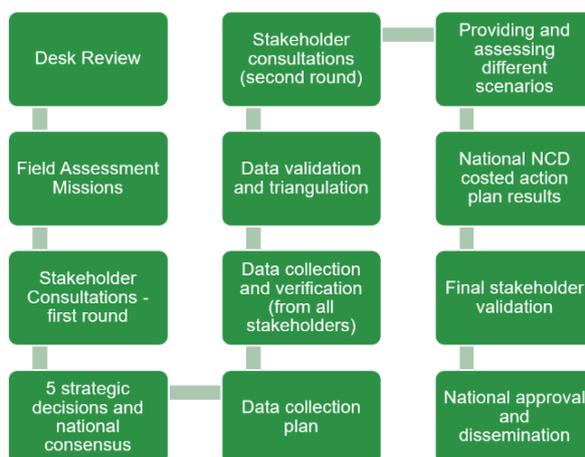


Excerpt from Bente Mikkelsen's Presentation "Access to Sustainable NCD Treatment & Care" at World Health Summit, 26 October 2020.

On 3 December 2020, the Defeat-NCD Partnership organised a multi-stakeholder workshop to share and gather feedback on the Partnership's evolving methodology for creating national NCD costed action plans.

More than 25 participants attended the session representing governments, multilateral institutions and development banks, including the Caribbean Public Health Authority; Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Germany; Ministry of Health, Gambia; Ministry of Health and Sports, Myanmar; Ministry of Health and Population, Nepal; Ministry of Health, Rwanda; Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation; World Bank; and WHO.

Developing A National NCD Costed Action Plan





“This methodology shows over the course of a number of years that cost-effectiveness improves, and these interventions become more cost-effective. That is really excellent, because it will encourage policymakers to begin to invest more into NCDs”

Miriam Schneidman, Lead Health Specialist, World Bank Africa Region, speaking at The Defeat-NCD Partnership’s methodology workshop for creating national NCD costed action plans

RESOURCING AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Since 2018, the Partnership has received initial pledges and contributions from the Government of Denmark, the European Commission, Novo Nordisk, Roche, Novartis, and Boehringer Ingelheim. The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust joined The Defeat-NCD Partnership as a new donor on 17 January 2020. The formal announcement was made on 9 February, during the third NCD Global Alliance Forum in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates.

The Defeat-NCD Partnership’s host agency (the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, UNITAR) submitted an official request to be invited to be pillar assessed by the European Commission on 11 September 2019. Since then UNITAR has reached agreement with the European Commission and the United Nations Controller for the European Commission to undertake and fund the pillar assessment during 2021. Once UNITAR is ‘pillar assessed’, The Defeat-NCD Partnership shall be eligible to receive funding from the European Commission.

Strategic agreements were entered between The Defeat-NCD Partnership and key institutional partners in 2020. These included agreements with Al Jazeera Media Network and the United Nations Volunteers to operationalise and amplify The Defeat-NCD Partnership’s work as it scales up across programme countries.

WHO WE ARE

NCDs represent the world’s greatest public and global health challenge. They are the leading cause of death and disability globally, accounting for seven of out every 10 deaths. Of these, 85 percent of premature deaths occur in low resource countries.

The Defeat-NCD Partnership is a practical response to the widespread call for action to tackle NCDs. Anchored within the United Nations, The Defeat-NCD Partnership brings together governments, multilateral agencies, civil society, academia, philanthropies, and the private sector for effective ‘public-private-people’ collaboration. The Secretariat of the Defeat-NCD Partnership is hosted at the United Nations Institute for Training and Research.

The Defeat-NCD Partnership's vision is universal health coverage for NCDs. Efforts are aimed specifically at assisting approximately 80 low-resource countries to achieve Sustainable Development Goal target 3.4: reducing premature mortality from NCDs by one-third by 2030.

With the dangerous relationship between COVID-19 and NCDs becoming ever clearer, the pandemic has further highlighted how addressing NCDs has not been a priority for many low resource countries. Underinvestment in fragmented health systems has led to rising prevalence of NCDs, especially among the four biggest global killers of CVDs, CRDs, cancer and diabetes.

NCDs, also known as chronic diseases, occur because of behavioural, physiological, environmental and genetic factors. Many can be prevented by reducing risk factors, such as tobacco use, physical inactivity, unhealthy diet and harmful use of alcohol. Better managing NCDs, through early detection and timely treatment, is critical to reduce disabilities and deaths.

In many low-resource countries, ineffective supply chains mean essential quality NCD medicines, diagnostics and equipment are unavailable or prohibitively expensive. A lack of sustainable financing options mean low-resource countries are unable to make necessary initial investments, and then suffer a permanent burden to their health and social systems from these long-term conditions.

The Defeat-NCD Partnership's approach to defeating NCDs is organised as four interconnected pillars of action. Taken together, these key action pillars constitute a comprehensive service package to tackle the most common gaps and constraints that challenge low-resource countries.

The Defeat-NCD Partnership's four key action pillars:

1. National NCD capacity building
2. Community scale-up of NCD services
3. Affordability and accessibility of essential NCD supplies and distribution
4. Sustainable NCD financing

For more information on The Defeat-NCD Partnership's approach and details of each action pillar, see our [strategy](#) and [brochure](#).