Joint Mission of the United Nations Inter-agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases


The focus of the Joint Mission was promote consented UN response for NCDs in Sri Lanka. Cardiovascular diseases, cancers, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases are important causes of premature deaths, among persons between the ages of 30-70 years. These NCDs are linked to exposure to common risk factors, namely tobacco use, unhealthy diet, physical inactivity and the harmful use of alcohol. Weak health systems that do not respond effectively and equitably to the health-care needs of people with NCDs also contribute to premature deaths from NCDs. The focus of the mission was on these premature deaths, and how they can be prevented by implementing a set of simple, effective and affordable solutions in Sri Lanka.

The Joint Mission reviewed action across the UN system and government in Sri Lanka in scaling up national efforts to prevent and control NCDs and the response of non-government stakeholders. The team reviewed progress in Sri Lanka towards the four time-bound commitments that Member States agreed at the 2014 High-level review in New York and the 18 targets that Member States will report at the Third High-level Meeting in 2018.

Overall there is some action across the UN system. Progress was noted in a number of NCD policy and programming areas at national level. The Mission identified a series of challenges that if tackled successfully would ensure progress towards contribution to, and the achievement of: (i) Sri Lanka’s national multisectoral NCD targets; (ii) the Third High-level NCD Meeting in New York in 2018; (iii) the 2025 voluntary global NCD targets; and (iv) the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

The Joint Mission made recommendations in the following five areas. They are: (i) governance, coordination and accountability; (ii) surveillance; (iii) focusing attention on costing, coordinating, implementing and monitoring a set of most cost-effective interventions; (iv) training and capacity building; and (v) raising awareness among the public.
The Joint Mission noted that Sri Lanka has a tremendous opportunity to demonstrate outstanding progress in preventing premature mortality from NCDs and be a model for countries in Asia.