



Republic of Rwanda
Ministry of Health



NATIONAL NCD CONFERENCE 2021

**Multisectoral Collaboration
for NCDs and UHC**

**25-26 NOVEMBER 2021
KIGALI, RWANDA**

FOREWORD

Dear Participants,

I am delighted to welcome you all to the first National Non-Communicable Diseases Conference happening on 25- 26th November 2021, Kigali, Rwanda, under the theme “Multisectoral collaboration for Non-Communicable Diseases and Universal Health Coverage”.

The NCD conference aims to be a distinctive platform that brings together different stakeholders from

government’s institutions, the private sector, academicians, international agencies, civil society, and People Living with NCDs organizations, in order to learn, discuss, share experiences and ideas and suggest strategies for a multisectoral and synergistic approach to effective prevention and control as well as UHC centered quality care delivery for NCDs, ensuring that no one is left behind.

This year, the two days program will resonate on the role and contribution of each and every partner in driving forward the newly launched National Strategy and Costed Plan for NCDs. The importance of prioritizing the WHO Best Buys and other recommended cost-effective interventions for NCDs prevention and control will be discussed, as well as the need for alternative and innovative mechanisms for sustainable financing for UHC.

Some major environmental risk factors for NCDs like air pollution and urbanization will be tackled.

The voices of People Living with NCDs (PLWNCDs) will be raised through the presentation and launch of the Advocacy Agenda for PLWNCDs.

The intersection of NCDs with infectious diseases will be highlighted, including the impact of COVID 19 pandemic on People living with NCDs



Prof. Joseph MUCUMBITSI
Chairperson of Rwanda NCD Alliance

and the benefits of integrated NCDs response leveraging on existing HIV/ AIDs services

The NCD Conference would not have been possible without the collaboration and major support from different partners. A major vote of thanks to The Ministry of Health and the Rwanda Biomedical centre, through its NCD Division, for their support, guidance and advice in the organization of this conference. Our gratitude goes also to our other main partners including Global NCD Alliance, Danish NCD Alliance, Defeat NCD Partnership, Rwanda Diabetes Association and WIWO Specialized Hospital for their financial and technical support.

I want to recognize the Rwanda NCD Alliance staff and the conference organizing team members, for their tireless efforts invested in the preparation of the conference as well as different other stakeholders, particularly our distinguished guests, speakers and moderators, who have contributed in many ways to the conference.

The journey to effective and sustainable multisectoral collaboration for NCD prevention and control is in years but the days, minutes and seconds we shall spend here for this first National NCD Conference will certainly contribute a lot to that goal.

I thank you all again for your physical and online participation and wish you a fruitful conference.

THE NATIONAL NCD CONFERENCE 2021

Rwanda Non-Communicable Diseases Alliance with partners is organizing the National NCD Conference in Kigali-Rwanda, November 25-26th 2021 under the theme “Multisectoral Collaboration for NCDs and UHC”. This theme has been inspired by the findings from the National NCDs situation analysis conducted by Rwanda NCD Alliance in collaboration with RBC which witnessed the level of involvement of stakeholders in the NCDs response and the United Nations (UN) in its global plan for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 emphasizing on the country’s efforts to prevent and treat NCDs for the reduction of premature mortality by one-third by 2030.

This eye-opening gathering is being undertaken to facilitate and promote further understanding of each sectoral participation on NCDs and UHC. However, facilitating the advocacy efforts in making sure that no one is left behind as far as the NCDs response is concerned, it will also be a great step towards the implementation of the National Strategy and Costed Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in Rwanda, 2020-2025 recently launched.

Furthermore, the conference will contribute to increasing comprehensive and multisectoral commitments for NCDs, harnessing meaningful involvement of people living with NCDs in addressing their health challenges, and shedding light on the current practices for HIV and NCDs integration in Rwanda.

General Objective:

Accelerating multi-sectoral actions responding to NCDs and UHC.

Specific Objectives:

To discuss overarching NCDs and UHC challenges and opportunities with key stakeholders including government institutions, private sector, international NCD alliances, and civil society organizations.

- To increase comprehensive and multisectoral commitments for NCDs and UHC.
- To engage stakeholders in supporting the advocacy priorities for NCDs and UHC.
- To harness meaningful involvement of people living with NCDs and youth in addressing their health challenges and louden their voices during the conference
- To discuss strategies related to health financing specifically on ways to increase budget allocation to NCDs and alternative financing for UHC for NCDs

THEME: MULTISECTORAL COLLABORATION FOR NCDs AND UHC

Sub-themes

1. The burden of NCDs, cost of inactions, and call for actions:

NCDs and UHC Situation analysis report presentation of Rwanda and other countries' situation analysis.

2. Effective cross-sector interventions of UHC for NCDs:

This session will be an inclusive panel discussion with key representatives from the government, civil society, private sectors, youth, and NGO on their roles, current update, SWOT analysis, and their individual way forward.

3. People-centered care: Voice of people living with NCDs:

People living with NCDs have to be at the forefront of the NCDs response since they are the ones experiencing all the challenges related to their conditions. People-centered care will be tackled through their meaningful involvement. Under this topic, we intend to showcase what has been done and lessons learnt from Our Views, Our Voices project. Leaning on the 4 pillars of global advocacy (prevention; treatment, care and support; human rights and social justice; meaningful involvement), this will not only be an opportunity to shed more light on the voices of people living with NCDs but also pledging more commitments from the stakeholders in the room.

4. NCDs and Infectious diseases: Integration of NCDs and HIV Services, The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on NCDs:

Reflecting on what happened over the past couple of months, COVID-19 has exposed the strengths and weaknesses of our health systems, shedding light on the sub-optimal resilience of even the ones qualified as high-performing. The catastrophic results from this pandemic are pointing us towards the fact that more needs to be done and adjusted to prevent future infections in regards to our health systems and focus. This furthermore demonstrates the need to prioritize health and integrate NCDs prevention and control into strengthening health and economic security.

On a different angle, death rates from NCDs are nearly twice as high in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) compared to high-income countries. Antiretroviral therapy (ART) for HIV enables people living with HIV to live long and productive lives. However, they are now becoming susceptible to NCDs in later life. The four NCDs that account for the greatest number of comorbidities among people living with HIV in LMICs are cardiovascular diseases (CVD), cervical cancer, depression, and diabetes. The risk of cervical cancer among women living with HIV compared to women without HIV has increased up to fivefold. HIV-hepatitis C virus co-infection is associated with CVD, diabetes and/or death in people living with HIV. With this known, the National NCD Conference is gathering stakeholders around this topic to discuss current practices as well as the gaps in that particular domain.

5. WHO Best Buys: Primordial interventions for NCDs Prevention:

Decision-makers need to prioritize policy options that bring the greatest possible health benefits from limited available resources. With this regard, the WHO introduced Best Buys and other recommended cost-effective interventions to prevent and control NCDs, as the primary health concern for most countries. There is a great concern with the inadequate progress in achieving global non-communicable disease (NCD) targets. Not only is there underutilization of cost-effective preventative NCD interventions (Best Buys), but low-value interventions (Wasted Buys) are widespread and wasted investments in NCD prevention are overlooked. A number of NCDs share one or more common predisposing risk factors all related to lifestyle to some degree: cigarette smoking, alcohol consumption, physical inactivity, unhealthy diet, etc. In large part, prevention, control, or even reversal of the aforementioned modifiable risk factors are realized through leading a healthy lifestyle (HL). The work should be based on the rigorous process of review and selection to generate a menu of medical and public health interventions to reduce modifiable risk factors in respect of diet, smoking, alcohol and physical activity, and to control and manage better the four major types of NCDs that contribute to 80% of the global premature mortality from NCDs: Cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer and chronic respiratory diseases. This conference will highlight and recommend intersectoral Healthy life initiatives on the Best Buys that will result in positive, measurable changes in the current poor health metrics.

6. Urbanization and NCDs:

Air pollution is described as the world's largest environmental health threat, which prematurely kills approximately 7 million people a year globally from stroke, heart attack, diabetes, lung cancer, chronic lung diseases, and neonatal diseases. It was responsible for 1.1 million deaths across Africa in 2019 and the majority of which were due to ambient air pollution and caused by non-communicable diseases. In Rwanda, the number of deaths and the fraction of disability-adjusted life-years attributable to household air pollution are three to four times greater than those associated with ambient air pollution. Initiatives like the car-free day which is a bimonthly mass sports event has been practiced in order to reduce the trends as far as ambient air pollution is concerned.

Urbanization on the other hand is a result of population migration from rural areas in addition to natural urban demographic growth. Today, more than half the world's population lives in cities, a number expected to rise to more than 70% by 2050, much of it in Africa and Asia. The urban environment and its associated lifestyle come with risk factors that threaten the health of individuals. It has been predicted that over 60% of the world population in low- and middle-income countries will be living in cities by 2030. Certain lifestyle and environmental factors related to urbanization have a significant effect on health and non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Urbanization is one of the main socio-environmental factors which has a relationship with changing lifestyles as an important risk factor for NCDs. Previous research in low- and middle-income countries has indicated that NCD risk factors are more common in urban than in rural areas.

Unfortunately, urban living encourages sedentary lifestyles. Overpopulation, road traffic density, excessive use of motorized transportation, poor air quality, and too few public spaces make physical activity more difficult in cities. At the global level, the absence of physical exercise and sedentary lifestyles are the 4th largest risk factor for mortality.

Controlling air pollution and exposure to sedentary life would tremendously reduce the burden of NCDs. In this conference, we would like to tackle and amplify the current practices as well as some of the possible solutions to the crisis.

7. Technology trends in NCDs management:

Digital technology is revolutionizing healthcare delivery. Worldwide, digital tools are leading to better and faster healthcare – healthcare that is more empowering and accessible for patients, more efficient for providers, and more cost-effective for health systems. It is probably the most powerful enabler that low- and middle-income communities can use to address the growing burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and achieve universal health coverage. Ensuring all people can access the health services they need without suffering financial hardship is essential to achieving resilient communities – communities that are prepared for evolving health threats and enjoy greater economic prosperity.

However, the health sector has been stubbornly slow to adopt new technology and as a result, multiple global health challenges have been impacting many economies worldwide and Rwanda. There is a need to integrate technology trends into future health strategies; Covid-19 for example has exposed the gaps within our health systems and facing disruption of health services due to this pandemic has put people living with NCDs at more risk of disease complications and even death. Luckily enough, mobile technologies are enabling new ways for NCDs management by providing powerful tools to both doctors and patients for effective prevention and treatment. It is expected to change the way healthcare is provided, driving progress toward universal health coverage and transforming outcomes for patients with NCDs

8. Alternative financing for NCDs.

In the past decade, NCDs have risen up the global agenda. High-level meetings of the UN General Assembly on NCDs were held in 2011, 2014, and 2018. As a result, important policy documents were developed: a Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of NCDs for 2013–2020 and an NCD Global Monitoring Framework (2013). NCDs were also included in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Goal 3.4 stating: “by 2030 reduce by one-third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being”. The share of development assistance for NCDs has been slowly growing in the last decade (e.g. from 1.2% in 2010 to 1.7% in 2016).

However, a recent review of the progress towards SDG 3.4 showed that it was inadequate in most countries. This issue is particularly acute in low-income and fragile settings. Hence, it is recommended that the international community increase financing and lending for the prevention and management of NCDs through bilateral and multilateral channels and through multi-donor funds and other innovative financing mechanisms.

It is believed that a lack of commitment to bold policies is an important reason for weak investments in NCDs. However, with the recently launched National Strategy and Costed action plan for the prevention and control of NCDs in Rwanda, we believe the trends will be reversed and that it will spark the substantial support of key actors into NCDs programs.

Another unexplored pathway lies in increasing domestic funding. Yet it can be achieved through assessing and increasing the excise taxes on risk factors commodities like alcohol, tobacco, sweetened drinks based on the consumption rate. This in turn will earmark part of the generated income to NCDs prevention and control programs and leverage on that to strengthen the presence of industry groups in the country, society's support to the measure, and political opportunities to approve such a tax.

So at the end of the day, how can Rwanda scale up the different mechanisms involved in increasing NCDs financing?

Expected Outcomes

- Improved perception and understanding of key responsibilities of stakeholders on NCD prevention and control.
- Increased number of stakeholders committed to act on NCDs
- Increased awareness on NCDs challenges and current interventions among the participants
- Empowered and well-engaged people living with NCDs
- Increased knowledge of the recommended cost-effective interventions and existing policies of UHC for NCDs in Rwanda.
- Shared learnings, recent technologies, and best practices in caring for NCD patients and those who are at risk.

Categories of Participants

- Government Institutions
- International Organizations
- Civil Society Organizations
- People living with NCDs
- Private Sector Partners
- Members of Media Houses

Conference Agenda

Time	Activity/ Topic	Assignee(s)
Day 1 - Thursday 25th November 2021		
07:30 AM-08:30 AM	Arrival and Registration	Secretariat
08:30 AM-09:30 AM	OPENING CEREMONY	
	Introduction	MCs: Jean Claude MUTABAZI Gisele H. UMUTONI
	Welcome Note: The burden of NCDs, cost of Inaction, and call for action.	Prof. Joseph MUCUMBITSI
	Opening Remarks	Guest of Honor, MoH: Dr. Patrick NDIMUBANZI
	Group photo with the Guest of Honor	
09:30 AM-10:00 AM	Breakfast	
10:00 AM-10:30 AM	Presentation on NCDs and UHC situation analysis	RNCDA: Prof. Joseph MUCUMBITSI
10:30 AM-11:00 AM	Presentation on National Strategy and Costed Action Plan for prevention and control of Non-Communicable Diseases in Rwanda (2020-2025).	RBC: Dr. Francois UWINKINDI
11:00 AM-11:15 AM	Keynote speech on the panel discussion 1	1. WHO Country Representative

11:15 AM-12:30 PM	<p>Panel Discussion 1: Multisectoral collaboration: Role of different stakeholders</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rwanda Biomedical Centre ▪ World Health Organization (WHO) - Rwanda Country Director ▪ Private Sector: Africa Healthcare Federation ▪ People living with NCDs: Stroke Action Rwanda 	Moderator : Jackson KARARA
12:30 PM-01:30 PM	Lunch	
01:30 PM-01:40 PM	Keynote Speech: HIV and NCDs Integration	Dr. Albert TUYISHIME
01:40 PM-02:25 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Panel Discussion 2: NCDs and Infectious Diseases: Integration of NCDs and HIV Services; the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on NCDs. ▪ Presenter: ▪ RBC: Dr Evariste NTAGANDA: Assessment of NCDs and COVID-19 ▪ RBC: Valentine DUSHIMIYIMANA: Health Determinants for major NCDs among people living with HIV in Rwanda ▪ AHF: AIDS Healthcare Foundation: Integration of NCDs and HIV services. 	Moderator: Jocelyne Emery INGABIRE
02:45 PM-03:30 PM	<p>Panel Discussion 3: Technology trends in NCDs management</p> <p>Presenters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Zipline ▪ EDPU Africa ▪ HMIS & EMD: Data collection for NCDs (challenges and achievements) 	Moderator: Caroline Akope Aisu
04:00 PM Onwards	Excursion: Kigali Tour	
Day 2 - Friday 26th November 2021		
08:30 AM-09:45 AM	Breakfast/ NCD Screening	

09:45 AM-10:00 AM	Wrap up of day 1 sessions	MC: Steven SETONDE Julie PIOTIE
10:00 AM-10:15 AM	Keynote speech on Advocacy and the role of people living with NCDs (Our Views Our Voice).	Katie Dain: CEO of the global NCD Alliance
10:15 AM-10:30 AM	Overview of the National Advocacy Agenda of People Living with NCDs: Their voices and priorities	Phillipa DECUIR
10:30 AM-10:45 AM	Launch of National Advocacy Agenda of People Living with NCDs	Team of People living with NCDs and RBC
10:45 AM-10:50 AM	Healthy Break	
10:50 AM-11:00 AM	Keynote speech: Financing for NCDs: Innovative initiatives (sin taxes) and challenges.	Defeat-NCD Partnership
11:00 AM-11:50 AM	Panel Discussion 4: Health financing strategies for NCDs: increasing domestic and external funding Panelists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ RRA ▪ ROCHE ▪ PIH ▪ World Bank ▪ Law expert: Spencer BUGINGO 	Moderator: Janvier KABOGO
12:00 PM-01:30 PM	Lunch	
01:30 PM-01:40 PM	Keynote speech on the panel discussion 5: Current environmental challenges to healthy life in Rwanda	Rwanda Environment Management Authority (REMA)
01:40 PM- 02:30 PM	Panel Discussion 5: Urbanization and NCDs Panelists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ City of Kigali ▪ MININFRA ▪ REMA ▪ University of Rwanda ▪ MINECOFIN 	Moderator: Grace Kelly MUVUNYI

02:30 PM- 02:45 PM	Healthy Break	
02:45 PM-03:30 PM	<p>Presentation on best NCD practices and innovative approaches in Rwanda and in the region</p> <p>Presenters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Slim and Fit/Care for Them: Interventions and best practices to address NCDs. ▪ International Cancer Institute: the implementation of ICI in Rwanda: current practices. ▪ East Africa NCD Alliance: Regional collaboration for NCD advocacy ▪ CEBHA+: the best practices and innovative approaches of CEBHA+ project in Rwanda 	MCs
03:30 PM-03:40 PM	Presentation of the Conference Highlights/Recommendations	RNCDA Secretary
03:40 PM-03:50 PM	Vote of Thanks	RNCDA Chairperson
03:50 PM-04:00 PM	Closing Ceremony	Guest of Honor: Minister of State or Delegate
04:00 PM Onwards	Standing Cocktail: Awarding, Networking and Socializing	

Conference Organization Team



As we were brainstorming about this conference, we dreamt of a friendly and nurturing ambiance under one roof where exchange of experience in a wide and diverse range will be happening thus fostering partnerships and encouraging joint actions to address the greatest enemy of the century #NCDs. Indeed, thank you so much for coming and turning our dreams into reality.

As we meet in Kigali and virtually, let's invest our best in building synergy to advance NCD prevention and control programmes. This conference is an opportunity and we believe we are making a collective commitment to improve the health status of people here and beyond. We are sure you have enjoyed every bit of it and let's keep the flame hot.

Please don't hesitate to approach any of the conference organization committee throughout and we hope to use this experience to do something big in the future.

#Together we can do it and we will do it.

Alphonse MBARUSHIMANA
Head of Conference Plans



