

WHO Executive Board 144 (EB144)

FDI and IADR joint statement on Item 5.8 Follow-up to HLM on the prevention and control of NCDs (EB144/20 and EB144/20 Add 1)

I am speaking on behalf of FDI World Dental Federation (FDI) and the International Association for Dental Research (IADR). FDI is the official representative body of over one million dentists and IADR is the global leader in dental, oral and craniofacial research.

The 2018 UN High-level Meeting on NCDs has set us back in the NCD response.

Its Declaration failed to acknowledge oral health, which was recognized in the 2011 Political Declaration and 2018 Report of the WHO High-level Commission on NCDs as a major public health issue that shares common risk factors with the leading NCDs.

Taxation on sugar-sweetened beverages (SSB) was also excluded from the Declaration, but we applaud the Secretariat for recommending in Annex 2 of its report that Member States implement taxation on all SSB, including fruit juices. Sugar is the primary factor for the development of dental caries (tooth decay) – the most widespread and prevalent NCD, which can cause pain, infection and even tooth loss.

We are deeply concerned that the next HLM on NCDs will take place in 2025 with only one comprehensive review scheduled for 2024. This is simply not acceptable. While we support the Secretariat's proposal to produce a yearly scorecard, the review of these scorecards must take place periodically before 2025 and indicators of oral health must be integrated.

FDI is a GCM/NCD participant and we agree with the proposed GCM/NCD workplan for 2020.

Countries must act now on oral health. We therefore call upon Member States to participate in this year's World Oral Health Day (WOHD) campaign 'Say Ahh: Act on Mouth Health' on 20 March. The campaign challenges individuals, communities and countries to take action to promote and prioritize oral health. Member States can reach out to their national dental associations for support with their WOHD activities.