

Preparation for the high-level meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on Universal Health Coverage

Thank you for the opportunity to deliver this statement by the World Heart Federation, supported by the International Diabetes Federation, World Stroke Organization, International Society of Nephrology, World Hypertension League, NCD Alliance, and Framework Convention Alliance.

At the 2017 WHA, the “best buys” document on NCDs was adopted. These best buys, when implemented, can support countries to reach both SDG targets 3.4 and 3.8.

You may ask yourself how. By implementing these best buys, governments will protect health, make populations more productive, save on health-care costs, and—when they implement taxes on tobacco, sugary drinks, and alcohol—generate revenues that can be ploughed back into financing UHC. The World Bank Group has also identified fiscal policies, particularly on tobacco, as win-win policy measures that achieves both public health goals and raises domestic resources by expanding fiscal space for UHC priority investments and programs.

We call on Ministries of Health to engage more productively with their colleagues in Ministries of Finance. We pledge to do more to support you, our friends in the Ministries of Health, to make the case for fiscal policies and to help you demonstrate that health expenditure is an investment, not a cost.

Thank you.

