

# Addressing the Rising Burden of Non-communicable Diseases in the Commonwealth

A Youth-focused Guiding Framework for Physical Inactivity and Unhealthy Diets



The Commonwealth



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Published by the Commonwealth Secretariat.

# Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Context</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>A Strategic Framework to Drive Behavioural Change</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Alignment with WHO and Other Global NCD Initiatives</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>About the Guiding Framework</b>	<b>7</b>
Goal	7
Scope	7
Intended audience	7
Vision	7
Key objectives	7
Ten key principles of the Guiding Framework	9
<b>Key Strategic Workstreams</b>	<b>10</b>
Workstream 1: Strengthening NCD policy advocacy, governance and accountability	10
Workstream 2: Community and youth engagement and empowerment for NCD prevention	10
Workstream 3: Networks, partnerships, technical capacity and training	11
<b>Strategic Enablers</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>14</b>



# Executive Summary

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are collectively responsible for the deaths of 41 million people per year, accounting for 74 per cent of deaths worldwide. Within the Commonwealth, around 10 million Commonwealth citizens die because of lifestyle-related illnesses, with cardiovascular and chronic respiratory diseases, diabetes and cancer accounting for more than 7 million fatalities (Commonwealth Secretariat 2018). This has a profound impact on economic prosperity and is a major threat to sustainable development.

In 2022, at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), held in Kigali, Rwanda, it was agreed that a more strategic approach was needed to address the rising burden of NCDs, involving multisectoral co-ordinated action to reduce this burden across the Commonwealth. This Guiding Framework is therefore an output following the CHOGM agreement, with goal of supporting Commonwealth member countries in their efforts to address the rising burden of NCDs through designing and implementing more effective interventions to reduce unhealthy diets and physical inactivity in Commonwealth countries. With youth representing a significant proportion of the Commonwealth's population, the Guiding Framework will focus on working with and for young people, ensuring that they play a key role in addressing the burden of NCDs in the Commonwealth.

This shortened version of the NCD Guiding Framework seeks to provide an overview of its goal, scope, audience and objectives, as well as detailing the workstreams in which countries, the Commonwealth and its partners will engage.

# Context

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are driven in part by modifiable risk factors that often emerge in childhood and adolescence, such as tobacco use, unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, harmful use of alcohol and air pollution (NCD Alliance 2023). It is estimated that 80 per cent of NCDs are preventable if these risk factors are well controlled (Ibid).

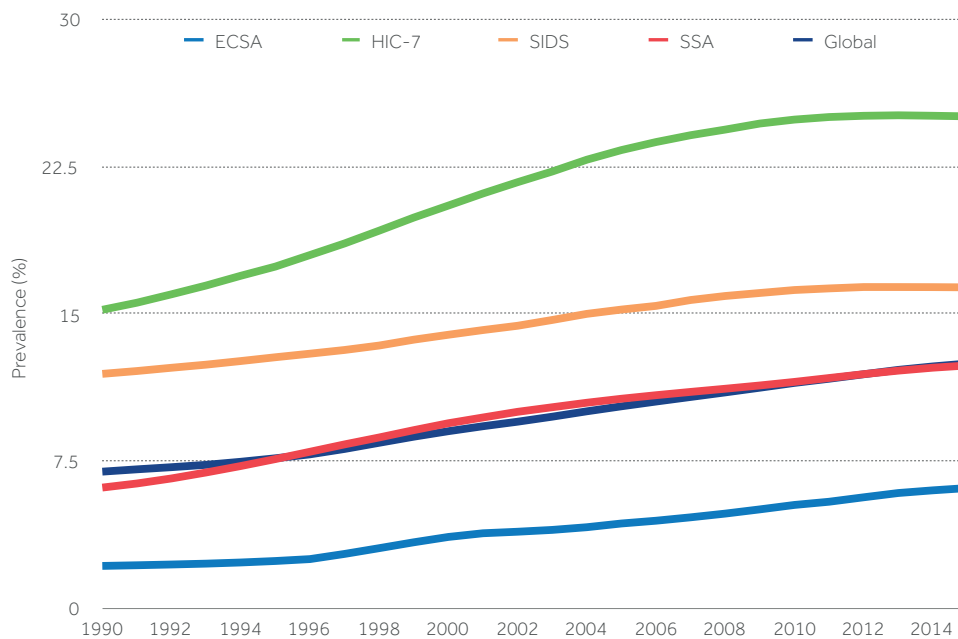
Unhealthy diets and insufficient physical activity are among the key risk factors for NCDs, while they are also leading global risks to health (Beaglehole et al. 2011).

Physical activity helps to prevent unhealthy weight gain and has also significant health benefits for mental health and physical health. Yet, one in four men and one in three women do not meet the World Health Organization (WHO) recommended levels of physical activity and more than 80 per cent of the world’s adolescent population are insufficiently physically active (WHO 2022a). It should be noted that physical inactivity is the fourth leading risk factor for NCDs worldwide, estimated to cause between 3.2 and 5 million deaths globally per year (WHO 2022a).

On the other hand, unhealthy diets account for more than 12 million deaths in adults worldwide every year (Vos et al. 2020). Worldwide data show that obesity has nearly tripled since 1975, with over 340 million children and adolescents aged 5–19 being overweight or obese in 2016 (WHO 2021). The Commonwealth’s small island developing states (SIDS) have some of the world’s highest rates of diabetes and obesity. A healthy diet fosters healthy growth and improves cognitive development and may have longer-term health benefits, such as reducing the risk of becoming overweight or obese and developing other diet-related NCDs later in life (Global Nutrition Report 2021).

There is huge value in investing in NCD prevention and control, as this can not only improve health and save lives but also there is a spillover in terms of improved economic productivity. Studies have shown that for each dollar invested in these interventions, a return of up to US\$7 could be generated through reduced health costs and improved productivity (WHO 2018a).

**Figure 1.1 Trends in obesity prevalence (%) among adults (20–79 years) in the Commonwealth by functional group, 1990–2014**



Source: adapted from Samuels et al (2018)

Note: ECSA: Eastern, Central and Southern Asia; HIC-7: seven high-income countries not already in SIDS grouping;

SIDS: small island developing state; SSA: sub-Saharan Africa; CW: Commonwealth.

Data not available for Saint Kitts and Nevis, Nauru and Tuvalu

There have been underutilised opportunities to address the current and future burden of NCDs among children and adolescents through interventions designed by and for this key audience. With the growing burden of NCDs threatening national economic, physical and social development in many Commonwealth member countries, young people must be engaged in more innovative ways to provide solutions to the NCD crisis – particularly in terms of addressing modifiable risk factors through the application of behavioural science and the development of policies to build a health-enabling environment.

In successive Commonwealth Health Ministers Meetings in 2022 and 2023, ministers have made commitments and endorsements on a multisectoral approach to addressing the rising burden of NCDs in the Commonwealth. In the 2022 meeting, ministers welcomed the Commonwealth Secretariat's proposed strategy on NCDs, to address the rising burden of NCDs by targeting community-level interventions and behaviour change across all age groups in society. In 2023, ministers noted the global crisis on NCDs and the commitment by Heads of Government to promote good nutrition and tackle malnutrition and NCDs. During the same meeting, ministers again supported the Commonwealth's new focus on promoting multisectoral co-ordination to address malnutrition, NCDs and the rising burden of mental health, utilising sport, physical activity and diet. The Commonwealth Secretariat is working to support these agreements, including through this Guiding Framework.

# A Strategic Framework to Drive Behavioural Change

The Commonwealth Secretariat has a long history of leading the charge for a world in which the burden of NCDs is reduced or removed. This history includes actions to convene key high-level meetings on the subject since 2007, and a consistent commitment to ensuring that NCDs, alongside universal health coverage, are permanent agenda items at Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings (CHOGMs) and Commonwealth Health Ministers Meetings (CHMMs). NCD commitments have been underscored in all subsequent CHOGM communiqués and health ministerial outcome statements, all emphasising a need to have multisectoral actions for addressing the common modifiable NCD risk factors, including tobacco use, harmful use of alcohol, unhealthy diets, physical inactivity and air pollution..

The Secretariat has been championing activities and projects to support countries in addressing the rising burden of NCDs, including the ongoing technical capacity programme to support NCD legislative drafting in the Caribbean and Pacific countries; mental health legislation in The Bahamas; the Commonwealth Moves project, an initiative that encourages individual and community ownership on addressing physical activity and NCDs; and taking collective action on cervical cancer.

In this new strategic approach, the Commonwealth Secretariat joins other global agencies in the fight to tackle the root causes of NCDs, which is now more urgent than ever – especially among SIDS. The guiding principle at the heart of this framework is centred on young people, defined by the Commonwealth as between ages of 15 and 29 years old, who represent more than 60 per cent of the 2.5 billion people living in the Commonwealth. Young people have been actively engaged in ensuring that interventions formulated for the framework are also aligned with their perspectives on what NCD behavioural risks among adolescents should be addressed and in line with recommendations by the 2016 Lancet Commission on Adolescent Health and Wellbeing (Patton et al. 2016). Young people have been engaged as major

stakeholders and have provided a wider perspective in terms of policy and guidelines, research and data generation, community engagement, and networking and partnerships.

The framework will utilise the powerful voice and momentum of young people to accelerate the implementation of the WHO 'Global action plan for NCDs'. This large youth population is particularly vulnerable to premature deaths relating to NCDs, as we know that two-thirds of premature deaths in adults are caused by risk factors and habits that were developed during their adolescent years, before the age of 19. Addressing the needs and voices of young people also aligns with Recommendation R9, from the report of the mid-term evaluation of the NCD 'Global action plan' (WHO 2020a):

*'Member States and WHO Secretariat to increase their focus on how NCDs differentially affect different groups including children, youth, disabled people, people living with HIV, older persons, indigenous peoples, refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants, as specified in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.'*

During the conceptualisation of this framework, the Commonwealth Secretariat engaged the support of the Commonwealth Youth Health Network (CYHN) to help co-design the approach and implementation of the Guiding Framework. CYHN is a youth-led network that partners with the Commonwealth Secretariat and the 56 Commonwealth member countries in achieving health-related development goals, with a particular focus on the needs of adolescents and young people. Drawing on these consultations, the framework utilised the WHO's (2013) *Global action for the prevention and control of NCDs (2013–2030)* and the WHO NCD 'best buys' (2017), to lay out programmatic intervention areas through which the Secretariat could use its comparative advantage. Many of the risk factors influencing NCDs go beyond the health sector, so action is required across government with the engagement of high-level leadership, parliamentarians, civil society and the relevant private sector groups.

With its embedded theory of change, targeting healthy behaviour among young populations and health-enabling environments, the Guiding Framework will serve as a practical guide for Commonwealth countries. It will also serve as an accountability mechanism to monitor and accelerate progress in the reduction of unhealthy diets and physical inactivity, building on the opportunities and specifically targeting the challenges in Commonwealth countries through a youth lens.

The Commonwealth Secretariat will use its unique power and capability to hold high-level political and multisectoral ministerial meetings. Furthermore,

there are other organisations with similarly powerful platforms across the Commonwealth, such as the Commonwealth Games Federation, the Commonwealth Foundation, Commonwealth-accredited organisations, civil society, parliamentarians' groups, business group forums, professional organisations' forums and youth forums. Beyond this convening power, the Secretariat delivers effective technical assistance to support countries individually to develop robust multisectoral policies that respond to issues such as the rising burden of NCDs.

# Alignment with WHO and Other Global NCD Initiatives

The NCD Guiding Framework intends to facilitate the implementation of two reports: (1) the WHO *Global action plan for the prevention and control of NCDs (2013–2030)*, basing on lessons found in the midpoint implementation, and (2) the WHO NCD 'best buys' and other recommended interventions, basing lessons on the implementation of the WHO NCD strategy. The Commonwealth will provide a unique platform and act as a signpost to the already-existing resources on NCDs available across the globe and from regional bodies. Some of these include following key resources.

- *Tackling NCDs: 'best buys' and other recommended interventions for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases*
- Draft updated Appendix 3 to the *Global action plan for the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases 2013–2030* (WHO 2023a)
- *Global action plan for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases 2013–2020* (WHO 2013)
- *WHO package of essential noncommunicable (PEN) disease interventions for primary health care* (WHO 2020b)
- *Global action plan on physical activity 2018–2030* (WHO 2018c)
- *ACTIVE: a technical package for increasing physical activity* (WHO 2018b)
- 'Global RECAP – Global Regulatory and Fiscal Capacity Building Programme: Promoting Healthy Diets and Physical Activity' (WHO 2022b)
- *Toolkit for developing a multisectoral action plan for NCDs* (WHO 2022c)
- 'Achieving well-being – A draft global framework for integrating well-being into public health utilizing a health promotion approach' (WHO 2022d)
- *Addressing and managing conflicts of interest in the planning and delivery of nutrition programmes at country level: report of a technical consultation* (WHO 2015)
- 'Playing the Long Game: A Framework for Promoting Physical Activity through Sports Mega-Events' (WHO 2022e)
- '2023 Bridgetown Declaration on NCDs and Mental Health' (WHO 2023b).

# About the Guiding Framework

## Goal

To support Commonwealth member countries in their efforts to address the rising burden of NCDs through designing and implementing more effective youth-focused strategies and interventions to reduce unhealthy diets and physical inactivity in Commonwealth countries.

## Scope

The framework provides overarching guiding principles and priorities on health promotion and disease prevention, as a key entry to behavioural intervention during the early years of life, an area often receiving less attention and investment compared to diagnostics and treatment of NCDs.

## Intended audience

The NCD Guiding Framework intends to support Commonwealth member countries in implementing effective policies and actions to reduce the burden of risk factors for NCDs and improve citizens' health and well-being. The Framework is also intended to be used by the Commonwealth Secretariat and the broader 'Commonwealth family', alongside its partners who have a major interest in youth-related NCD interventions.

## Vision

The vision of the NCD Guiding Framework is to stimulate the establishment of comprehensive, well-co-ordinated, integrated and sustainable NCD prevention and control policy and programmes across Commonwealth countries that go beyond the health sector.

## Key objectives

- a. **Reduce NCD-related morbidity and mortality:** Implement effective and sustainable interventions to reduce the prevalence and impact of NCDs, focusing on reducing risk factors such as unhealthy diets and physical inactivity.
- b. **Promote healthy behaviours:** Raise awareness and promote behavioural changes that contribute to preventing and managing NCDs, with a particular emphasis on youth engagement and empowerment.
- c. **Strengthen multisectoral and inter-sectoral collaboration:** Foster partnerships and engage stakeholders from diverse sectors, including health, education, sport, civil society, the private sector and governments, to develop and implement comprehensive NCD policies and initiatives.
- d. **Enhance capacity and knowledge sharing:** Strengthen national and regional capacity in NCD prevention, control and research by promoting knowledge exchange, technical assistance and training opportunities among member countries.
- e. **Integrate a gender perspective:** Incorporate gender into all aspects of the strategy, addressing the unique challenges and needs of all in relation to NCD prevention, treatment and support.
- f. **Engage young people:** Empower and engage youth, while leveraging their voice as agents of change in reducing unhealthy diets and physical inactivity in the Commonwealth.

Table 1.1: The theory of change underpinning the NCD Guiding Framework

THEORY OF CHANGE						
<b>Impact</b>	Long term: reduced incidence of NCDs in the Commonwealth; Immediate: increased capacity for prevention and control of NCDs through effective intersectoral and multisectoral action that reduces community exposure to NCD risk factors and promotes positive lifestyle choices					
<b>Goals</b>	To embed positive lifestyle choices early in life; to promote inclusivity and resilience within communities; to reduce risk of NCDs by supporting member countries; to tackle the root causes of NCDs through a preventative approach; to reduce exposure to NCD risk factors among citizens by creating a health-promoting environment through policies					
<b>Workstreams</b>	<b>Workstream 1: Policy and advocacy – to create enabling policy environment and increased engagement of non-health sectors</b>			<b>Workstream 2: Community engagement and empowerment for NCD prevention</b>	<b>Workstream 3: Networks and partnerships</b>	
<b>Outcome areas</b>	<b>Policy and advocacy</b>	<b>Governance</b>	<b>Accountability</b>	<b>Community engagement and empowerment</b>	<b>Technical capacity</b>	<b>NCD knowledge</b>
<b>Outcomes</b>	Effective multisectoral policies for NCDs are in place and enforced; NCD best buys are implemented (on diet, physical activity)	Effective intersectoral programmes in place; youth, the private sector, CSOs are sufficiently engaged; Commonwealth Multisectoral Commission established and functional	Reduced disparities in NCD response in Commonwealth regions; up-to-date NCD data available and used in decision-making	Communities in Commonwealth regions are empowered and engaged in the NCD response; increased proportion of individuals practising positive lifestyle behaviours	Member countries have increased technical capacity to respond to NCD burden in their country and region	Increased availability of data, research outputs and reports to inform policy
<b>Interventions and activities</b>	Policy dialogues, multisectoral engagement, policy advocacy, technical assistance	Intersectoral and multisectoral forums, and high-level meetings on NCDs; strengthen capacity and engagement of youth groups and CSOs	Establish monitoring and evaluation (M&E) database for NCDs; create regional roadmap for NCDs; produce Commonwealth NCD report	Interventions to create enabling environment, e.g. health-promoting schools and work places and communities; education campaigns on healthy diets, physical activity and well-being; health-promoting health facilities; meaningful engagement of patient groups	Enable adaptation of NCD policies and guidelines; enhance participation of member countries in regional and global NCD initiatives	Facilitate regional knowledge sharing by establishing Commonwealth Knowledge Hub for NCDs
<b>Assumptions</b>	Sufficient capacity of the Secretariat to co-ordinate implementation; political and institutional support of member countries; alignment with economic and political interests; strong ability to mobilise and engage with the private sector; strong co-ordination mechanisms with partners; both individual and environmental NCD risks are addressed; increased capacity for health promotion and prevention at healthcare facilities; strong linkages with the community					
<b>Inputs</b>	Financial resources, training, human resources, infrastructure, policy guidelines, policy declarations, regional frameworks, technical guidelines, strategic partnerships					
<b>Stakeholders</b>	Commonwealth Secretariat, governments, civil society organisations, bilateral and multilateral agencies, academic and research institutions, the private sector, community					

## Ten key principles of the Guiding Framework

1. **Addressing the disparity in prioritisation:** By raising awareness about the burden of NCDs, including their risk factors and their impact on individuals, communities and economies, the framework aims to foster a shift in priorities towards addressing NCDs on par with communicable diseases.
2. **Empowering young people and communities:** The involvement of young people and communities is crucial for designing and implementing effective NCD interventions. By engaging youth and communities, their perspectives, knowledge and skills can contribute to the design and implementation of tailored interventions that are culturally sensitive and contextually relevant. Empowerment at 'downstream' levels of the system can be the trigger for effective behaviour change in our young people that can be a safeguard against NCDs in the future.
3. **Adopting a targeted and holistic approach to NCD shared risk factors:** The framework acknowledges the interconnection and shared underlying causes of NCDs. By addressing single risk factors in isolation, previous efforts have fallen short of achieving substantial progress in NCD prevention and control. The framework advocates for a comprehensive, multisectoral approach that recognises the interdependencies between various risk factors and addresses the broader socio and commercial determinants of NCDs.
4. **Promoting multisectoral collaboration:** Addressing NCDs requires a response that extends beyond the health sector alone. By fostering partnerships and collaboration between various sectors, including education, youth, sport, gender and civil society, the framework aims to leverage expertise, resources and knowledge from diverse sectors. This will strengthen the overall response to NCDs.
5. **Equity- and gender-sensitive interventions:** The framework must stimulate conditions and opportunities that are equal to all and reach the most vulnerable and marginalised members of society. Adopting a rights-based approach is essential to ensure interventions reflect local culture and traditions.
6. **Clear, consistent, powerful and persuasive messaging:** Stronger arguments must be made by a range of trusted voices and amplified by local and national media to make the economic case for NCD prevention and demonstrate return on investment. NCD prevention must be seen as a critical form of investment to generate higher economic growth from a healthier population, with the redistribution of funding spent on the treatment of avoidable NCDs.
7. **Ensuring enforceable policies:** Expressions of intent without enforceable policies have limited the impact of previous NCD-related efforts. The framework emphasises the importance of translating policy intentions into enforceable measures, while also ensuring the effective implementation of NCD-related policies at the national and regional levels.
8. **Enhancing implementation and accountability:** The framework recognises the need for robust monitoring and the establishment and implementation of accountability mechanisms to drive meaningful progress in NCD prevention and control. By strengthening accountability mechanisms, the framework seeks to close the gap between policy formulation and effective implementation, ensuring that actions align with the intended impact.
9. **Utilising data and available tools at scale:** Despite the availability of evidence-based tools and interventions for NCD prevention and control, underutilisation has hampered progress. The framework underscores the importance of better utilising data to determine the most effective tools and interventions and then scaling up the use of these tools and interventions.
10. **Utilising new technologies and innovation:** The use of innovations such as open data and artificial intelligence to continually improve the implementation mechanisms of the Guiding Framework will bring about more effective solutions to the NCD crisis.

# Key Strategic Workstreams

## Workstream 1: Strengthening NCD policy advocacy, governance and accountability

### Rationale

NCDs pose a significant burden on the health and well-being of populations in Commonwealth countries. Strengthening the policy landscape is essential to effectively prevent and control NCDs, reduce their impact on individuals and communities, and improve overall health outcomes. Strengthening the policy landscape will enhance the alignment and integration of NCD prevention and control measures across sectors, ensuring policy coherence and maximising impact. Studies have shown that the availability of policies and laws targeting NCD-related lifestyle and behavioural risk factors among adolescents varies substantially across regions. The 2016 Lancet Commission on Adolescent Health and Well-being recommended investment in dominant NCD-related health behaviours among adolescents as a means of preventing future disease development (Akseer et al. 2020). It is imperative that young people are engaged throughout the process, from identification of the problems and opportunities through to policy formulations and implementation.

The Commonwealth Secretariat and its broader family of nations and accredited organisations can offer a platform for strengthening the policy environment and for increased youth engagement through the following mechanisms.

- **Advocacy and convening power:** The Commonwealth's major strength is its capability to convene high-level meetings beyond the health sector that have NCDs on the agenda. This has already happened at both the recent Commonwealth Sports Ministers Meeting (CSMM) and the Commonwealth Education Ministerial Action Group (CEMAG).
- **Utilisation of the broad 'Commonwealth family' of 56 nations, its sister organisation, the Commonwealth Foundation, and more than 80 accredited organisations, including Commonwealth professional bodies and**

Commonwealth parliamentary groups, the Commonwealth Local Government Forum, and the Commonwealth Youth Council and its 13 Commonwealth Youth Networks.

- **Technical expertise:** The Commonwealth's technical assistance support service provides funding to support countries with critical work, such as drafting NCD legislation and robust NCD-prevention policies.
- **CHOGM deliberations with major initiatives and political guidance:** For example, the 2022 CHOGM Kigali Declaration on Child Care and Protection Reform, which laid down potential actions to better protect children and young people across the Commonwealth.
- **Ongoing joint work between the Secretariat's Health and Trade teams:** The aim here is to leverage economies of scale for strategic areas like trans-fat elimination, which look to explore innovations and translate them into approaches.
- **Knowledge sharing and management:** The Commonwealth is facilitating the sharing of good practices, taking advantage of its diversity and developing regional public goods; as well as sharing the best practices of existing technical working groups from various disciplines.
- **Utilisation of the Commonwealth youth networks and youth platform to engage and involve young people in decision-making for NCD risk factor control.**

## Workstream 2: Community and youth engagement and empowerment for NCD prevention

### Rationale

Community engagement and empowerment are crucial components in addressing NCD risk factors effectively. First, 'downstream' interventions can create a stronger enabling environment by involving community health workers and volunteers, ensuring culturally appropriate, youth-led and targeted NCD prevention efforts. Second, supporting

youth advocacy champions serves as inspiration for others, driving community engagement and promoting NCD prevention and control at the grassroots 'downstream' level.

The Commonwealth family of over 80 accredited organisations specialising in thematic areas such as education, gender, health, sport and young people, along with other Commonwealth platforms, provide key opportunities to promote NCD prevention and strengthen community engagement efforts by accessing their knowledge and experience. Some examples include the following.

- **Advocacy and convening power:** The Commonwealth's strategic interactions at the ministerial level are already connecting with civil society in the health sector and beyond. For example, the Commonwealth Advisory Committee on Health (CACH) has members from civil society organisations (CSOs), as well as other inter- ministerial working groups.
- **Commonwealth networking and partnerships:** The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, as well as the Commonwealth Local Government Forum and other Commonwealth-accredited organisations beyond the Secretariat can be better utilised to amplify the work in this Guiding Framework. The focus here could also be through working more in alignment with the Commonwealth Foundation and the Commonwealth Games Federation.
- **Knowledge management:** The Commonwealth facilitates sharing of good practices, taking advantage of its diversity and by developing regional public goods that can provide evidence for community engagement activities and campaigns.
- **The existence of 13 different youth networks** across a range of thematic areas, including education, health and sport, provides significant opportunities to empower young people immediately to support the implementation of this Guiding Framework. This engagement can be co-ordinated initially by the Commonwealth Health Youth Network and the Commonwealth Youth Sport for Development and Peace Network and by the Youth NCD Working Group, once set up.

### Workstream 3: Networks, partnerships, technical capacity and training

#### Rationale

To implement more innovative and effective national NCD responses, there is a need to strengthen collaborations with partners across a range of networks. This Guiding Framework will expand on ongoing collaborations with the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and WHO under memorandums of understanding (MOUs) that include dedicated actions relating to intersectoral approaches to tackling NCDs and collective approaches using all areas of comparative advantage. The Commonwealth Secretariat aims to strengthen networks, build partnerships, enhance capacity and promote knowledge sharing in the fight against NCDs.

The Secretariat will also use its unique position in advocating for physical activity and sport as a facilitator of better and more healthy lives and improved economic prosperity for Commonwealth residents.

Further, the Commonwealth can offer a more integrated platform to accelerate efforts for prevention and control of NCDs. A few examples include the following.

- **Commonwealth of Learning (CoL):** This can be used to provide a unique platform for knowledge sharing and collaboration among member countries. Leveraging the Commonwealth as a key partner in disseminating NCD-related knowledge and information will facilitate wider reach and accessibility. By utilising the Commonwealth of Learning hub and other platforms, we can ensure that NCD resources, training materials and best practices are shared effectively, enabling member countries to strengthen their NCD response efforts and promote collective action.
- **Partnership and networking:** The Commonwealth's strategic interaction with many actors, including regional bodies, CSOs and accredited organisations, can offer an opportunity to further foster networking and collaboration.

- Knowledge management: The Commonwealth can facilitate sharing of good practices, taking advantage of its diversity and by developing regional public goods that will directly benefit and strengthen the effectiveness of our networks and partnerships.
- MOUs with WHO and UNESCO offer a good platform to enhance the translation and implementation of guidelines and policies. They can also increase access to technical assistance and leverage resources for prevention and control of NCDs in the region through a more co-ordinated approach.

# Strategic Enablers

The successful implementation of this Guiding Framework will depend on the translation of the objectives and work programmes contained within it into country-level strategies. At the Commonwealth Secretariat level, the implementation mechanism for the strategy includes both existing and new mechanisms to effectively address the challenges of NCDs within the Commonwealth.

Under existing mechanisms, there are established platforms and partnerships that can be leveraged for NCD interventions. In the health and sport sectors, the Commonwealth Health Ministers Meeting (CHMM), the Commonwealth Sports Ministers Meeting (CSMM), the Commonwealth Advisory Committee for Health (CACH) and the Commonwealth Advisory Body on Sport (CABOS) provide key avenues for collaboration and exchange of best practices. Additionally, the MoU with the WHO strengthens the partnership and allows for technical support and knowledge sharing. Other potential mechanisms include the Youth Ministers Meeting (CYMM) and the Commonwealth Youth Health Network, which can play a crucial role in engaging young people and promoting NCD prevention.

The two other intergovernmental Commonwealth organisations, the Commonwealth Foundation and the Commonwealth of Learning, as well as

Commonwealth-accredited organisations including the Commonwealth Local Government Forum, the Commonwealth Games Federation and others across the thematic areas of health, education and sport, have a significant role in supporting NCD initiatives. They can provide funding, expertise and resources to implement programmes and projects aimed at addressing NCDs. Other organisations focusing on health, education and local government are also valuable partners in this endeavour.

In addition to existing mechanisms, new mechanisms are proposed to enhance the implementation of the strategy. The establishment of the Commonwealth Youth Intersectoral NCD Working Group is a key step in fostering collaboration among ministries responsible for health, education, youth, sport and gender. This working group can facilitate joint efforts, knowledge exchange and co-ordinated actions to address NCDs.

By combining these existing mechanisms and introducing new partnerships, the Guiding Framework aims to create a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach to address NCDs within the Commonwealth. The collaboration of various sectors and organisations will facilitate the sharing of knowledge, resources and best practices, leading to more effective prevention, management and control of NCDs.

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**Commonwealth Secretariat**

Marlborough House, Pall Mall  
London SW1Y 5HX  
United Kingdom

[thecommonwealth.org](http://thecommonwealth.org)

