



**Statement to 73rd World Health Assembly
Agenda Item 3 - Response to COVID-19**

The World Obesity Federation thanks both WHO and Member States for their global leadership on COVID-19 and welcomes the inclusion of NCDs within the Draft Resolution.

Evidence shows that obesity is one of the leading pre-existing conditions which increases the risk of COVID-19 complications, alongside other NCDs. As a result of COVID-19, we are seeing a detrimental impact on the provision of health services and care for people living with obesity. Furthermore, it is likely that the COVID-19 pandemic will increase risk of obesity and NCDs, due to changed dietary patterns, reduced opportunities for physical activity and impacts on mental health, particularly amongst the most vulnerable.

Given that all countries are off track to meeting global obesity targets, the absence of obesity in the [draft resolution on the COVID-19 response](#) is a missed opportunity reinforce commitment to action. Now, more than ever, we must ensure that strong policies are implemented to reduce obesity globally and protect people living with obesity. It is vital that short- and long-term policy responses to COVID-19 ensure necessary access to healthcare for people living with obesity and build on the NCD “Best Buys” to support healthy populations.

We therefore call on WHO to support Member States to:

- **Recognise that obesity is a disease which increases risk of COVID-19 complications** and ensure that people living with obesity and other NCDs have access to the health services they need.
- **Ensure that national responses to COVID-19 integrate treatment and prevention policies for obesity and other NCDs in the short term and long term**, including those which ensure equitable access to nutritionally adequate food, strengthen food systems, support physical activity and promote good mental health in order to avert longer term health crises and support resilience to this and future pandemics.