



Provisional Agenda item 8.1: Accelerating progress on prevention and control of NCDs including oral health and integrated eye care in the WHO South-East Asia Region

World Obesity Federation and its Members commend WHO and its Member States in the South-East Asia region for their leadership to accelerate progress on the prevention and control of NCDs. While the region has **some of the lowest prevalence of overweight and obesity globally**, trends have been and continue to rise at an alarming rate: only one country [out of 10] appears to be on track to achieve the 2025 NCD target set in the Regional Action Plan.

Obesity is a chronic disease that independently increases mortality rates and is a major risk factor for the three NCDs responsible for the majority of premature deaths worldwide - cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and cancer. World Obesity's [latest report](#) highlighted the correlation between COVID-19 deaths rates and obesity, with evidence showing that **death rates are ten times higher in countries where over 50% of the population is overweight**.

Overweight and obesity is now fastest rising in emerging economies, many of which are experiencing a double burden of malnutrition. **Indonesia, Maldives, Timor-Leste, Thailand, Bhutan, Myanmar, Bangladesh and Nepal all appear in the top 10 list of countries** with the most rapid rise in adult obesity prevalence,¹ leading to a steep increase in other comorbidities with [13.1 deaths/1000 cases of diabetes](#) recorded in the region. World Obesity's [Global Atlas on Childhood Obesity](#) predicts that by 2030, five countries in South-East Asia will have over 1 million school-age children and youth living with obesity, whilst also recording the second highest prevalence and number of infants under 5 years with stunting (32% or 55.5m in 2018).

As more than two-thirds of all deaths in the region are from NCDs – half of which occur between the ages of 30 and 70 years – and given the undeniable link between obesity and outcomes in case of illness from COVID-19, it is vital that we focus on improving the health and **reducing the vulnerability of people living with, affected by, or at risk of developing obesity**, while working to reduce the double burden of malnutrition. We urge all Member States:

- To ensure NCD patients have **continued access to routine obesity treatment and management** services during COVID-19
- To integrate actions to address malnutrition in all its forms across health, food, transport, water and sanitation, education, and economic systems
- To ensure **that people living with obesity are consulted** throughout the development of guidance and policies affecting their care, both in COVID-19 recovery plans and in advancing the global NCD agenda.
- To include the **prevention, management and treatment of obesity as a priority in UHC efforts** and as a vital pathway to meet other relevant SDG targets, including SDG 3.4 on the reduction of premature mortality from NCDs

¹ World Obesity Federation. *Obesity: Missing the 2025 Global Targets*. London; 2020. Accessible at: <http://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/wof-files/970 - WOF Missing the 2025 Global Targets Report ART.pdf>



World Obesity welcomes the request to extend the Regional NCD Action Plan to 2030. As the COVID-19 pandemic threatens to slow down progress and reverse the gains made up-to-date, **Member States should prioritise the implementation of nutrition and other public health policies** in their recovery plans.



World Obesity Federation

Suite 406, 107-111 Fleet Street, London EC4A 2AB

T: +44 (0)20 7936 9987 E: enquiries@worldobesity.org

www.worldobesity.org

Registered charity number 1076981. Registered in England and Wales, 3802726. A company limited by guarantee.