



Side event: Accelerating action on obesity prevention and management

Tenth Annual Meeting of the Friends of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases

on the occasion of the opening week of the

Eightieth Session of The United Nations General Assembly

**25 September 2025, 18:30-20:30 EDT (New York)
Westin Hotel, Grand Central, New York, USA**

Organizers

Government of Malaysia (TBC), the World Health Organization, and the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases

Co-sponsors

UNICEF, UNDP, WHO Foundation and World Obesity Federation.

Format

In person event

Objectives

1. Reinforce high-level political commitment to obesity prevention and control as part of the noncommunicable disease (NCD) and mental health agenda;
2. Identify opportunities for financing, technical support, and coordination to support country-led responses around obesity prevention and management;
3. Promote collaboration across sectors—including food, education, digital, and urban planning to drive change;
4. Advance accountability for implementation of global and national obesity targets and strategies;
5. Announce winners of the 2025 Task Force and WHO Awards that highlight action in the area of obesity prevention and control.

Background and rationale

This is the tenth meeting of the Friends of the Task Force,¹ and this year has as its focus on the prevention and treatment of obesity.

Friends of the Task Force meetings, held each year during the high-level week of the UN General Assembly, promote political action and increased financing for NCDs and mental health, foster partnerships to support country-driven solutions, and drive forward multisectoral action on NCDs and mental health as part of the broader 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.²

In 2025, Friends of the Task Force will focus on obesity prevention and control. As the demand from Member States for assistance from UN system to respond to the obesity crisis continues to increase, this session provides the opportunity to:

- Elevate obesity prevention and management as a global health and development priority;
- Promote implementation of the WHO Acceleration Plan to Stop Obesity, with its five workstreams: (i) evidence-based, impactful and cost-effective actions; (ii) delivery for impact; (iii) global advocacy; (iv) engaging partners and (v) accountability;³
- Highlight national progress, in particular learning lessons from those receiving the 2025 Task Force award;
- Identify ways that the UN system can provide ever greater support for country action.

Overweight and obesity are largely preventable.

Tackling obesity must be recognized first as a societal rather than an individual responsibility with the solutions to be found through the creation of supportive environments and communities that embed healthy diets and regular physical activity as the most accessible, available and affordable behaviours of daily life.

Stopping the rise in obesity will demand multisectoral actions that can have a more direct impact on the disease (such as food manufacturing, marketing and pricing) and others that seek to address the wider determinants of health (such as poverty reduction and urban planning).

Health sector responses designed and equipped to identify risk, prevent, treat and manage the disease are also urgently needed. These actions need to build upon and be integrated into broader efforts to address NCDs and strengthen health systems through a primary health care approach.

WHO acceleration plan to stop obesity

¹ The United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases was established by the UN Secretary General in 2013 and reports annual to ECOSOC. The Task Force brings together 46 UN system agencies and promotes whole-of-government, whole-of-society and whole-of-UN action to support countries prevent and control NCDs and reduce mental health conditions, in the context of achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. See: <https://uniatf.who.int/>.

² Previous meetings have included the follow as themes: (i) integrating NCDs into development cooperation; (ii) unlocking financing through investment cases; (iii) mental health; (iv) the COVID-19 pandemic; (v) promoting digital innovation; and (vi) advancing economic arguments and people-centred approaches for NCD and mental health responses.

³ The WHO acceleration plan to stop obesity was endorsed at the 75th World Health Assembly in 2022, adopting recommendations for the prevention and management of obesity. See: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240075634>.

Draft programme

Refreshments/networking (6.30-6.45 PM)

Welcome and introductions (6:45 – 6:55 PM)

- Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General, World Health Organization (*potentially video record if DG won't be able to attend*)
- Government of Malaysia (TBC)

Update on the work of the Task Force over the last 12 months (6.55-7.00 PM)

- Dr. Nick Banatvala, Head of Task Force Secretariat

Panel: Key issues in reducing obesity and how development partners can support governments to tackle obesity (7.00 – 7:45 PM)

Moderator: Luz Maria De Regil, Director, Nutrition and Food Safety, World Health Organization

- Ministry #1 (Member State TBD – that do not receive award)
- Ministry #2 (Member State TBD – that do not receive award)
- Sir Jeremy Farrar, Assistant Director General, Health Promotion, disease prevention and control, WHO (TBC)
- Dr Joan Matji, UNICEF Director, Child Nutrition and Development (TBC)
- Johanna Ralston, CEO, World Obesity Federation
- Person with Lived Experience (Fix My Food movement?)
- World Bank (name TBC)
- NSA

Award Ceremony - Ministries of Health/ Non-State Actors (7.45–8.30 PM) - Presented by Sir Jeremy Farrar, Assistant Director General, Health Promotion, disease prevention and control, WHO

Closing Remarks (8.30 – 8:45 PM)

Anil Soni, CEO, WHO Foundation

Refreshments/Networking reception (8.45-9.45 PM)