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Safeguarding Africa's health

Africa Conference on Tobacco Control &
Development:
**BREAKING BARRIERS, BUILDING FUTURES:
ADVANCING THE TOBACCO CONTROL
ECOSYSTEM IN AFRICA**

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Presentation Outline

- I. Impact of tobacco on public health in Africa
- II. Africa CDC's strategy on NCDs with focus on addressing risk factors
- III. AU - Africa CDC Multisectoral taskforce
- IV. Opportunities for collaboration under the taskforce
- V. Conclusion



1. Impact of tobacco on public health in Africa

- ❑ Non-communicable diseases (NCDs), injuries, and mental health conditions constitute serious impediments to achieving the vision of the "Agenda 2063" to build an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful Africa driven by its citizens.
- ❑ NCD conditions cause substantial human losses and economic costs across African Union (A.U.) Member States today, and they are expected to become the continent's leading cause of death and disability by 2030.
- ❑ The tobacco epidemic is one of the biggest public health threats the world has ever faced, killing over 8 million people a year around the world.
- ❑ More than 7 million of those deaths are the result of direct tobacco use while around 1.3 million are the result of non-smokers being exposed to second-hand smoke.
- ❑ According to the World Health Organization (WHO), NCDs account for about 30% of all deaths in Africa, a figure that is projected to rise as the continent undergoes rapid urbanization, demographic shifts, and lifestyle changes.
- ❑ These contributed to an estimated 2.7 million premature deaths on the continent in 2019 and are expected to become the continent's leading cause of death and disability by 2030.
- ❑ All forms of tobacco are harmful, and there is no safe level of exposure to tobacco. Cigarette smoking is the most common form of tobacco use worldwide.
- ❑ Other tobacco products include waterpipe tobacco, various smokeless tobacco products, cigars, pipe tobacco, etc.
- ❑ Waterpipe tobacco use is damaging to health in similar ways to cigarette tobacco use. However, the health dangers of waterpipe tobacco use are often little understood by users.



2. Africa CDC's strategy on NCDs with focus on addressing risk factors

- ❑ Africa CDC developed and launched a continental strategy on NCDs, Injuries and Mental Health Strategy (2022-2026) & 2nd Africa CDC Strategic Plan (2023-2027)
- ❑ The strategy focus on addressing NCD risk factors increase the risk of dying from NCDs: ***tobacco use, physical inactivity, harmful use of alcohol, unhealthy diets and air pollution***
- ❑ Africa CDC strategy on NCDIMH (2022-2026) & 2nd Africa CDC Strategic Plan (2023-2027) build on the NCDIMH strategic priorities and aligned to the AU-Africa CDC Multisectoral Taskforce on NCDIMH.

NCDIMH Strategy (2022-2026)

Strategic objective 1: Enhance the capacity of MoH/NPHI to develop, integrate and implement national and supranational frameworks and policies for the prevention and control of NCDs, Injuries and Mental Health.

Strategic Objective 2: Advocate for political commitment to NCDs, Injuries and Mental Health

Strategic Objective 3: Align Member States, Regional Economic Communities and partners to establish, strengthen and coordinate multi-sectoral action on NCDs, Injuries and Mental Health

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs), injuries, and mental health conditions are a rising threat to health and development on the African continent and require action across multiple sectors.

These conditions cause severe human losses across African Union (AU) Member States (an estimated 2.7 million premature deaths on the continent in 2019¹) and incur also substantial economic costs (for example one condition alone, cardiovascular disease led to an estimated loss of 12 billion USD across sub-Saharan African countries in 2010²). They are expected to become the continent's leading cause of death and disability by 2030.³ Citizens seek care for these conditions, such as heart attacks, road traffic injuries, or suicides, in the health system. But the drivers and risk factors of non-communicable diseases, injuries and mental health conditions are largely determined in sectors other than health, such as agriculture, trade, education, labor, and transport amongst others.⁴ Therefore, a multisectoral approach is a key requirement to curb the NCDs, injuries, and mental health conditions burden. This importance is reflected in the second Africa CDC Strategic Plan

(2023-2027) and the Africa CDC NCDs, Injuries and Mental Health Strategy (2022-2026) that emphasizes aligning Member States, Regional Economic Communities and Partners to establish, strengthen, and coordinate multisectoral action on NCDs, injuries and mental health across the continent.⁵

The drivers and risk factors of these conditions are largely determined in sectors other than health, such as agriculture, trade, education, labor, and transport amongst others. Therefore, a multisectoral approach is a key requirement to curb the burden of NCDs, injuries, and mental health conditions on the continent. As reflected in the second Africa CDC Strategic Plan (2023-2027) building on the NCDs, Injuries and Mental Health Strategy priorities, there is a strong need to align regional economic communities (RECs) and partners to establish, strengthen, and coordinate multisectoral action for NCDs, injuries, and mental health.



2. Africa CDC's strategy on NCDs with focus on addressing risk factors

Strategic Objective 1: (Priorities)

- Strengthen MoH/NPHI capacities and capabilities to implement NCDs and Injuries prevention and control strategies and ensure these are embedded into wider multisectoral strategies.
- Support MoH/NPHI to integrate NCDs and Injury surveillance into national surveillance systems and develop system interoperability.
- Support MoH/NPHIs to develop and implement national NCDs, and Injuries RCCE strategies

Strategic Objective 2: (Priorities)

- Advocate for the prioritization of NCDs, Injuries and their risk factors and improve access to care.
- Use existing AU/Africa CDC mechanisms (e.g. NPHI score cards) for peer review and accountability frameworks for NCDs and Injury prevention and control.

Strategic Objective 3: (Priorities)

- Establish or strengthen the capacity and capability for a national multisectoral mechanism for the prevention and control of NCDs, Injuries and Mental Health
- Build or strengthen Member State's capacities to address social and environmental determinants of NCDs and Injuries, in addition to conventional risk factors.
- Promote local and regional initiatives targeting risk factors for NCDs and Injuries in Schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods to promote health lifestyles early in life.
- Promote harmonization of core indicators for NCD surveillance across sectors
- ***Establish an African Union multisectoral taskforce to lead and coordinate action across sectors.***



3. AU - Africa CDC Multisectoral taskforce

Opportunities for collaboration under the taskforce

- In November 2023, the Africa CDC in collaboration with the African Union established and launched the first ever African Union-Africa CDC Multisectoral Taskforce on NCDs, Injuries and Mental Health Promotion in the continent.
- The multisectoral taskforce comprise of representatives from AU organs/departments, Regional Economic Communities and Member States.
- The African Union/Africa CDC Multisectoral Taskforce on NCDs, Injuries and Mental Health work in three thematic technical areas such as:
 - Commercial Determinants of Health (***demand and supply reduction of tobacco and trans-fat products in the continent***)
 - Road Traffic Injuries
 - Mental Health Stigma and Social Determinants of Mental Health

The African Union multisectoral taskforce will initially focus on three key areas with high attributed disease burden and potential for effective multisectoral action, aligned with the Africa CDC NCDs, Injuries, and Mental Health Strategy (2022–2026):

1. Commercial determinants of health,
2. Road traffic injuries,
3. Mental health stigma and social determinants of mental health.

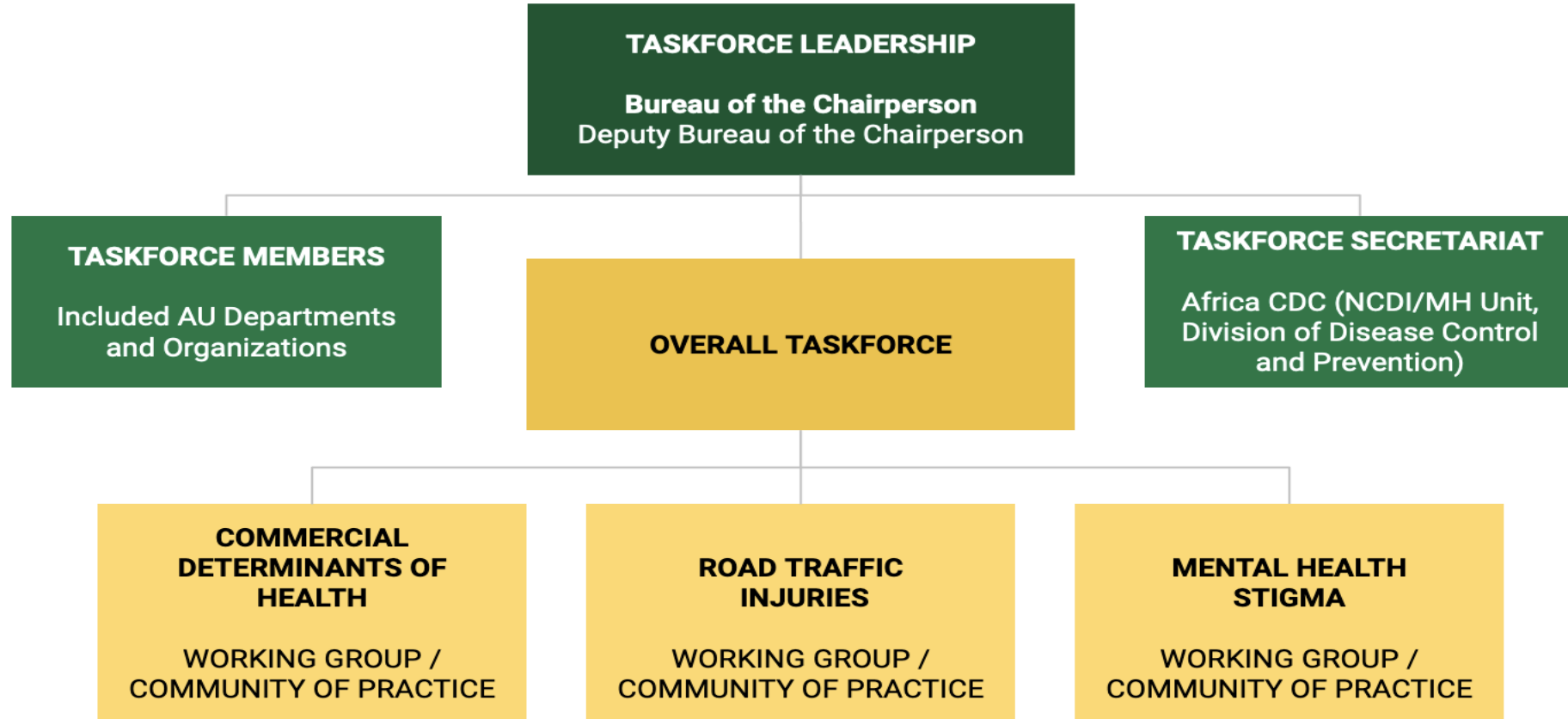
The taskforce worked in three groups to determine a bold, achievable, timebound, and measurable target for each area. The groups also deliberated on the relevant AU roles and responsibilities, collaboration with additional actors and existing initiatives, the potential process, finance, and champions to achieve the target. These results form the backbone of the taskforce action plan (Appendix B) and will be outlined here for each area.

1. Commercial Determinants of Health

To tackle the commercial determinants of health,⁷ the taskforce aims to reduce the demand and supply of tobacco and transfat products on the continent. There is clear evidence that these products harm population health.⁸ As a result of strengthened regulation in other world regions, many African countries are at risk of being a “dumping ground” for transfat products,⁹ and similarly also a target for market expansion by tobacco producers.¹⁰ This dynamic makes continental action particularly important. Evidence-based and cost-effective interventions exist and have been used by several Member States but important gaps persist for tobacco control and transfat products.



3. AU - Africa CDC Multisectoral taskforce Opportunities for collaboration under the taskforce

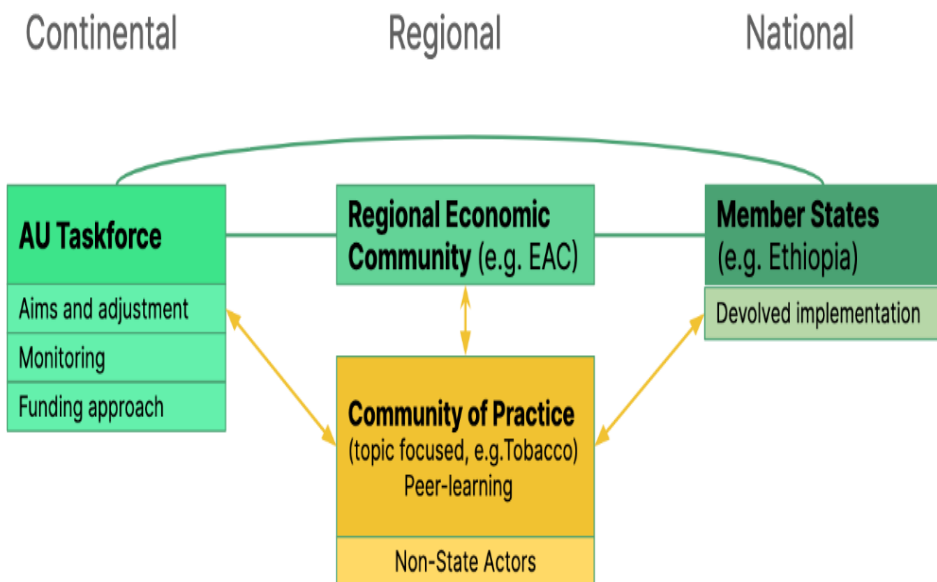


Governance structure at the level of the African Union

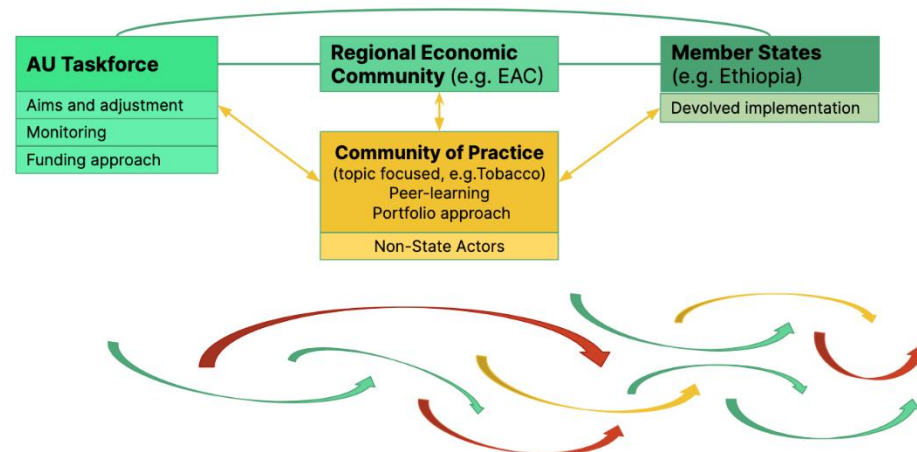


3. AU - Africa CDC Multisectoral taskforce Opportunities for collaboration under the taskforce

Structure across the governance levels
(continental, regional, national)



Working method for thematic working groups / communities of practice



- ❑ The taskforce could leverage complementary interventions across levels
- ❑ Aligning tobacco control interventions across the continental, regional and national level - harmonizing assets, and reinforcing each other's efforts strategically is essential



4. Opportunities for collaboration under the multisectoral taskforce

- ❑ Effective tobacco control interventions in the continent requires multisectoral approach (whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches)
- ❑ Africa CDC, ACBF, CTCA, tobacco control stakeholders and partners can leverage on the AU-Africa CDC Multisectoral Taskforce on NCDIMH to move the tobacco control agenda in the continent.
- ❑ **TC Priority Areas that require partnership and collaboration with the AU-Africa CDC Multisectoral Taskforce: Taskforce Plan 2025**

1. Addressing the commercial health determinants of health

Activities:

- Public awareness, educational outreach and media engagement.
- Policy dialogue on ***Smoke Free Laws, Taxation, Illicit trade on Tobacco Products, Graphic Health Warnings and Messages, and Tobacco Advertisement, Promotion and Sponsorship.***
- Awareness creation during the **African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agriculture meeting** on (3-5 Dec 2024), Marrakech, Morocco.

2. Reducing the demand and supply of tobacco products and trans-fat on the continent by 2028.

- **Support the implementation** of the WHO FCTC for 2 countries in the continent.
- Conduct assessment to identify African countries that implement/adopt the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and share experiences and cross-country learning

Africa CDC and TC stakeholders/partners will work together in the AU Member States in Continent through the AU-Africa Multisectoral Taskforce on NCDIMH to coordinate the implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.



5. Conclusion

To achieve the objectives of Tobacco Control and Development:

- Multisectoral coordination, stakeholder/partner collaboration is essential.
- Africa CDC is open to partnership with tobacco control key ***stakeholders/alliances/CSOs***, etc in the continent through continental multisectoral taskforce.
- The AU-Africa CDC Multisectoral taskforce on NCDIMH comprising of the different AU organs and departments, partners, etc can be used as entry point in the continent to reduce the demand and supply of tobacco products.
- Addressing NCDIMH through multisectoral action not only improves public health but also supports the economic and social growth of the continent.
- Reducing the NCDIMH burden enhances workforce productivity, reduces healthcare costs, and supports the economic resilience needed to fuel Africa's growth.

