



**WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION**

# **NOTE FOR THE PRESS**

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## **WHO EXECUTIVE BOARD AGREES TO FORWARD GLOBAL STRATEGY ON DIET, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND HEALTH TO MAY WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY**

**Geneva** - World Health Organization's (WHO's) Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health has been accepted by the organization's Executive Board (EB) as an agenda item for the 2004 World Health Assembly (WHA) in May. Following discussion, the EB, which is meeting in Geneva this week, agreed to allow Member States until 29 February 2004, to make further comments on the draft document. The secretariat will then prepare a final draft for the full membership to consider at WHA.

EB members today agreed on the wording of the draft resolution that will accompany the strategy document, following requests by some delegates for amendments.

The strategy was requested by Member States at WHA 2002 to address two of the major risk factors responsible for the heavy and growing burden of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), which include cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, cancers and obesity. NCDs now account for some 60% of global deaths and almost half (47%) of the global burden of disease.

WHO secretariat has developed the strategy document through a wide-ranging series of consultations with all concerned stakeholders. This has included formal meetings with Member States (attended by more than 80 countries), other UN agencies, civil society and nongovernmental organisations, and the private sector. The strategy explains the global burden of NCDs and how healthier diet, nutrition and physical activity choices can help to prevent and control them. The document specifies roles for WHO, Member States, UN agencies, the private sector and civil society in helping to reduce the occurrence of NCDs.

"NCDs are a global health concern," said Dr Catherine Le Galès-Camus, WHO Assistant-Director General, Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health. "The strategy requested by our Member States gives them a strong instrument to do something about this growing public health problem. But changing diet and physical activity patterns will not be easy. One of the strategy's most important conclusions is that we need to adopt a multi-sectoral approach to reducing the burden of death and disability from NCDs. To succeed, we have to mobilise the combined energy, resources and expertise of all global stakeholders. The work described in this Strategy could lead to one of the largest positive shifts in population health ever undertaken and should put populations on pathways to lifelong and sustained improvements in their health."

**EXECUTIVE BOARD  
113th SESSION**

**WHO PRESS OFFICE**

### **WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health – Timeline**

May 2002: 55th World Health Assembly (WHA) passes resolution asking for a strategy. (WHA55.23)

December 2002-July 2003: Extensive formal and informal consultations with Member States, other UN agencies, civil society and nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector, with the assistance of an expert independent reference group .

August-September 2003: Strategy document drafted.

December 2003: Draft strategy document and draft resolution made available publicly to Member States for 113th session of WHO Executive Board.

January 2004: 32-member WHO Executive Board, comprised of Member State delegations, considers the draft strategy and accompanying resolution, and approves forwarding the documents to 57<sup>th</sup> WHA for final consideration.

29 Feb 2004: Deadline for Member State suggested revisions to document.

Mid-March 2004: The final draft strategy will be made publicly available to WHA members.

May 2004: 57<sup>th</sup> WHA, comprised of WHO's full membership of 192 countries, will consider adopting the Strategy.

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Full details on the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health can be found on [www.who.int/hpr/global.strategy.shtml](http://www.who.int/hpr/global.strategy.shtml). Executive Board documents can be found at [www.who.int/gb/](http://www.who.int/gb/). Note that due to translation requirements, the final draft resolution will not be available on the Executive Board website until the morning of 23 January.

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