



Peer learning round table on SDG 3:

Building Health Systems for the Future: Inclusive, Resilient, and Multisectoral Solutions for Achieving SDG 3 in the UNECE Region

(Please provide a working title; it can be amended at a later stage.)

Thursday, 3 April 2025, 10:00 – 13:00

Palais des Nations, Room V

Languages: English, French and Russian

Background

Health systems in the UNECE region are at a critical juncture. The long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the rise of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), mental health crises, climate change, conflicts and humanitarian emergencies are reshaping the health landscape. Meanwhile, population ageing is reshaping health needs, requiring systems to adapt and respond effectively. These global megatrends are deepening inequalities, straining health systems, and threatening progress toward SDG 3—ensuring good health and well-being for all.

The WHO's European Health Report 2024 highlights urgent priorities, including protecting children's health, tackling the growing burden of NCDs, addressing mental health challenges, and strengthening health system resilience. With the number of people aged 80+ in the WHO European Region set to triple by 2050, adapting health systems to support ageing populations is crucial. Innovative financing and multisectoral approaches are more urgent than ever to address these demographic shifts alongside existing and emerging health challenges.

However, this moment also presents an unprecedented opportunity for transformation. The 2030 Agenda calls for science-driven, inclusive, and forward-thinking solutions, necessitating health systems that are proactive, resilient, and equitable. This round table will explore innovative policy actions and best practices to ensure that all populations are able to access quality health services. This session will also explore how sectors outside of health can contribute to achieving SDG 3, emphasizing the importance of cross-sectoral solutions in building resilient, equitable health systems.

Guiding Questions:

1. How can multisectoral collaboration drive progress on SDG 3, and what roles can sectors outside of health play in ensuring universal access to health services?
2. What innovative approaches, policies and financing models are necessary to ensure equitable access to health services for all, particularly in times of crisis and demographic shifts?
3. How can health systems become more inclusive and resilient, addressing the needs of diverse and marginalized populations, including children, migrants, youth, and older persons?
4. How can data, new technologies, and evidence-based strategies help create more effective health policies and strengthen resilient health systems?



Programme

10:00 – 10:05 | Opening Remarks

- **Speaker:** Dr. Gundo Weiler, Director, Director, Special Advisor to the Regional Director, WHO Regional Office for Europe

10:05 – 10:25 | Keynote Address

Topic: *"Shaping the Future of Health in the WHO European Region: Insights from the Hearings Informing the Second WHO European Programme of Work and Vision for SDG 3"*

- **Speaker:** Dr. Gundo Weiler, Director, Director, Special Advisor to the Regional Director, WHO Regional Office for Europe

Moderation: Dr. Ritu Sadana, Head, Ageing and Health, Department of Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health and Ageing, Division of Universal Health Coverage – Life Course, WHO Headquarters

10:25 – 11:25 | Segment 1: Strengthening Health Systems in the Context of Demographic Change to Promote a Healthier, Longer Life

As life expectancy rises, many still face poor health in later years, emphasizing the need to promote health and well-being from childhood to older age. Health systems must shift from reactive care to proactive approaches that strengthen prevention, improve access, and support healthier ageing. This session will explore how innovation and system adaptation can ensure that longer lives are also healthier lives for all.

- **Introduction**
 - Dr. Ritu Sadana, Head, Ageing and Health, Department of Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health and Ageing, Division of Universal Health Coverage – Life Course, WHO Headquarters
- **Panel Discussion:**
 - **Panelists**
 - Ms. Klara Dragovic, UNICEF Youth Representative
 - Ms. Guljemile Annaniyazova, Deputy Chair of the State Statistics Committee of Turkmenistan
 - Ms. Sofia Pires Bento, Coordinator, National Strategy for Active Mobility, Institute of Mobility and Transport I.P., Portugal
 - Mr. Alejandro Bonilla Garcia, Chair, NGO Committee on Ageing
- **Floor Discussion and Q&A**
- **Reflections from UN Agencies**
 - Ms. Florence Bauer, Regional Director, UNFPA EECARO
 - Mr. Gabriele Fontana, Regional Health Adviser, UNICEF ECARO

11:25 – 11:45 | Break

11:45 – 12:45 | Segment 2: Building Resilient Health Systems – Financing, Multistakeholder Partnerships, and Inclusion

Health is a key pillar of our society, and when health security is compromised, it affects the very foundations of every aspect of our lives, with long-lasting repercussions. In the WHO European Region, we are experiencing a permacrisis—a prolonged period of interconnected crises, including increasing pandemic risks, drug-resistant infectious diseases, and both natural and human-made hazards, such as



climate-related events and conflicts. These challenges underscore the urgent need for resilient health systems capable of addressing immediate and long-term health threats.

- **Introduction**
 - Ms. Alicia Cebada, Health Attaché at the Permanent Mission to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva, Spain
- **Panel Discussion**
 - **Panelists:**
 - H.E. Ambassador Zsófia Havasi, Hungary
 - Mr. Matthew Vella, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry for Education, Sport, Youth, Research and Innovation, Malta
 - Ms. Nadja Raicevic, Centre of Excellence (FoodHub), University of Donja Gorica, Montenegro
- **Floor Discussion and Q&A**
- **Reflections from UN Agencies**
 - Mr. Arthur Erken, IOM Regional Director ECA

12:45 – 13:00 | Closing Remarks

Organized by WHO/Europe with the regional UN Issue-based Coalition on Health and Well-being (Members: FAO, IOM, ILO, OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNEP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNOPS, UN Women, UNECE, UNESCO, WFP)