Draft Terms of Reference for a Global Coordination Mechanism for Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs)

(IOE comments on the Second WHO Discussion Paper 1 November 2013)

Thank you for giving the IOE the opportunity to comment on the paper.

Mission of the IOE

The International Organisation of Employers (IOE) is the largest network of the private sector in the world, with a membership of 150 business and employer federations in 143 countries. In social and labour policy debate taking place in the International Labour Organization, across the UN and multilateral system, and in the G20 and other emerging processes, the IOE is the recognized voice of business.

The IOE seeks to influence the environment for doing business, including by advocating for regulatory and other frameworks at the international level that support entrepreneurship, private sector development, and sustainable job creation. This will enable businesses to work with others to tackle the global challenges we face today.

The IOE supports national business organisations in guiding corporate members in matters of international labour standards, business and human rights, corporate social responsibility, occupational and public health and safety, and international industrial relations.

IOE specific interest with the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases

The IOE recognises the importance of preventing and controlling noncommunicable diseases and the part that enterprises can play because

- Businesses need all their staff to be present and performing at optimum levels to contribute to sustainable enterprises, growing employment prospects and economies.
- As NCDs are considered preventable because the risk factors are modifiable, the workplace is an important source and place of information and education.
- In many countries, the employer may be the only, or best, accessible source of healthcare information and interventions or may be the financial provider for access to the services.
- Health information provided to workers can permeate to the family and community.
- As the IOE represents businesses across all sectors, sizes and geographies through their national employers’ organisations, we recognise that there are both challenges and opportunities for businesses from issues surrounding NCDs.

IOE engagement with WHO

We are grateful to the WHO for involving us in the meetings and discussions on engagement of non-state actors and recognise that this latest discussion paper is purposeful and action-oriented. It proposes a realistic coordination mechanism to help achieve the goals of cutting the toll of NCDs, through involvement of those who have the means to influence progress through effective partnerships.
We fully endorse the need for WHO engagement with actors that can provide added-value. We support the overarching principles and approaches being discussed that engagement with non-State actors should be based on:

- Demonstrating a clear benefit to public health;
- Respecting the intergovernmental nature of WHO;
- Supporting and enhancing the scientific and evidence base that underpins WHO’s work;
- Management so as to reduce any form of risk to WHO (including conflicts of interest);
- Being conducted on the basis of transparency, openness and inclusiveness.

The IOE believes that it can make a considerable contribution to the proposed functions of a global coordination mechanism being as they are suggested:

- Advocating and raising awareness;
- Brokering knowledge and information;
- Encouraging innovation;
- Promoting multisectoral action;
- Promoting accountability;

We look forward to engagement as a non-state actor partner under the responsibilities proposed to:

- Commit to implementing a set of actions included in the WHO Global NCD Action Plan 2013-2020;
- Support national efforts for prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases, inter alia, through exchange of information on best practices and dissemination of research findings;
- Be guided by WHO normative guidance and technical tools to support the implementation of the WHO Global NCD Action Plan 2013-2020.

We consider the proposed periodicity of general meetings and potential for working groups, with WHO providing the Secretariat for a global coordination mechanism, the development of a time-bound outcome-based work plan with the proposed administrative arrangements as a realistic and manageable way forward.

The IOE believes that their added value to improving public health is by leveraging the workplace as a means of providing information and health care provision for all workers, their families and communities.

For this to be most effective it is also necessary for member States to engage non-State actors such as employers’ organisations in discussions and policy development on public health at national level and the IOE is able to support national employers organisations’ in that engagement.

8 November 2013