

The Kingdom of Norway

Positions for UN High Commissioner for the World Health Organization

I. Addressing the Challenges to Accessing Vaccines

The Kingdom of Norway (Norway) understands and agrees with the principle of equal access to health services and recognizes the lack of this access in many developing countries. Norway supports the Global Vaccine Action Plan (GVAP) of providing the full benefits of existing vaccines to all people, regardless of their status and location. **Internationally**, Norway endorses the resolution EB130.R12, put forward by the Executive Board of the GVAP, specifically its plan to promote the supply of vaccines while also enhancing their affordability and accessibility. Over the course of 20 years, the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) have and will receive financial support from Norway in the form of nearly USD two billion all together. Both are organizations that strive to promote the unbiased use of vaccines in low-income countries and to develop new vaccines. **Regionally**, as a member of the European Economic Area (EEA) and the European Free Trade Agreement (EFTA), Norway works in close partnership with the European Center for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC). The ECDC, in seeking to promote the spread of immunization information, has developed two surveys on Immunisation Information Systems (IIS) status and functionalities to better understand the amount and quality of information available in EU/EEA countries. As a member of the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) Executive Board, Norway helps represent Western Europe in urging governments in Europe and Central Asia to invest in health systems designed to reach the most vulnerable children; it also works to mobilize funding and assistance necessary to develop policies and strengthen management in national immunization programs. **Nationally**, Norway provides access to immunizations for all of its citizens, especially children. In recognition of individual rights, vaccination is not mandatory in Norway, yet it is heavily encouraged and available. According to research done by UNICEF, by one year of age, 96 percent of children are immunized against diphtheria, pertussis, and tetanus (DPT), and 91 percent are immunized against measles.¹ The Vaccines Department of the Norwegian Institute of Public Health (NIPH) gives information and advice on vaccines to health personnel, the Ministry of Health and Care Services, and the public. It also supplies vaccines for the national childhood immunisation programme as well as influenza vaccines and other state-funded vaccines to at-risk groups and health personnel. While continuing to promote access to vaccines at a local level, Norway would like to do the same internationally through a **Plan of Action, P.I.C.C.**: **P**rovide funding to low-income countries, through increased financial requirements of developed Member States in the GAVI, for the purpose of hiring more healthcare workers to administer vaccines and increase the overall percentage of vaccinated children; **I**nform citizens in developed countries, through various forms of media, on the benefits of vaccines to combat parent hesitancy due to imperfect knowledge regarding the effects of vaccinations; **C**reate training programs for healthcare workers in local governments in which personnel learn the most effective ways to encourage and administer immunizations; **C**ombat the increasing presence of harmful propaganda regarding the origin and purpose of vaccines in developing countries by facilitating coordination and informative communication between governments and their healthcare professionals.

¹ "Child Health," UNICEF, n.d., accessed September 16, 2018, <https://data.unicef.org/country/nor/>.

II. Increased Prevalence of Non-Communicable Diseases in Developing Member States

The Kingdom of Norway (Norway), with the understanding that non-communicable diseases (NCDs) account for 70 percent of all deaths, recognizes the severity of the impact of NCDs.² Knowing that 90 percent of NCD-related deaths occur in low-and-middle income countries (LMICs), that many of these cases are preventable or treatable, and that they reinforce situations of poverty, Norway desires to show full support for the third Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of promoting the well-being of all people, especially through encouraging healthier lifestyles to combat NCDs.³ **Internationally**, Norway voted in support of A/RES/66/2, recognizing the extent of the problems caused by NCDs and emphasizing the necessity for collective action against their increased prevalence through reduction of risk factors and promotion of healthy environments. Through previous engagement with the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), Norway has helped achieve great progress internationally, concerning the reduction of mortality rates and promotion of influential programs, through these goals. Norway is also a member of the World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, which seeks to effectively apply, on a legal basis, measures to regulate tobacco consumption. Through its participation in the UN especially, Norway works towards the reduction of poverty as a direct means towards improved health. **Regionally**, Norway supports resolution EUR/RC56/R2, a framework for European nations to better respond to the prevalence of NCDs, especially through regional cooperation and coordination against NCDs. With the WHO Regional Office for Europe, Norway has participated in forming the European Food and Nutrition Action Plan (EUR/RC50/R8), whose purpose is to reduce the number of preventable NCDs caused by unhealthy diets. The European Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases is an action-oriented plan, of which Norway is a part, to combat NCDs in Europe. This strategy balances actions that avoid the causes of NCDs with actions that improve the health and quality of life for those already coping with the diseases. **Nationally**, Norway was the first country to launch a national NCD strategy in response to the WHO Global Action Plan adopted in 2013. Keeping in mind that NCDs account for approximately 80 percent of Norwegian deaths, it has pledged to work toward a 25 percent reduction in premature deaths caused by NCDs by 2025.⁴ Additionally, Norway has established a public health advisory board to attract political attention and public support for the Norwegian NCD-Alliance. This board has been implemented and maintained to better control and prevent NCD-related deaths. Norway's universal health-care fights against increased NCDs through more affordable benefits. The Norwegian Institute of Public Health, in collaboration with the Norwegian Directorate of Health, works to develop and report on indicators for NCDs in order to provide more accurate data regarding NCDs. Norway's response to the increased prevalence of NCDs manifests itself in a **Plan of Action, H.E.A.L.:** **H**elp LMICs implement more affordable healthcare through policy advising and increased funding; **E**ducate individuals on the importance of healthier diets and physical activity; **A**dvocate for the promotion of NCD prevention through public policy on both national and international levels; **L**ower tobacco and alcohol consumption among adults, and push for stricter laws regarding the use of alcohol and tobacco among children.

² "Noncommunicable diseases," World Health Organization, last modified 2018, accessed September 17, 2018, <http://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/noncommunicable-diseases>.

³ "Noncommunicable diseases."

⁴ "Norway launches national NCD strategy," Union for International Cancer Control, last modified June 28, 2017, accessed September 17, 2018, <https://www.uicc.org/norway-launches-national-ncd-strategy>.