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ENRF Response to the web-based consultation on the WHO Independent High-level Commission on NCDs draft Report

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Submitted by Karen Bjørro, President, on behalf of the European Nursing Research Foundation (ENRF). This document has received input from our advisors and experts within our organisation.

About ENRF

The European Nursing Research Foundation (ENRF) is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation founded in May 2013 by the European Federation of Nurses Associations - a federation of 36 National Nurses Associations. Its mission to promote and encourage nursing research as a factor for professional excellence to benefit citizens' health in the EU and Europe, to use nursing research to influence EU policies, and to promote evidence-based decision-making.

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General Comments

We support the WHO General Secretary's decision to establish an Independent High-Level Commission on Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) to provide bold recommendations on how countries can accelerate progress towards SDG target 3.4 on the prevention and treatment of NCDs and the promotion of mental health and well-being. We welcome the opportunity to provide comment on the Commission's draft report.

We would like a stronger emphasis on the health workforce. The world's health workers need to be mobilized to support action on NCDs. Nurses comprise half of the healthcare workforce and provide up to 80% of primary health care services worldwide. Nursing practice is at the core of an effective health system and efforts to prevent promote and sustain health are dependent on the strength, capacity and capability of the nursing workforce. Recognized as the most trusted profession, nurses are in a highly respected and influential position to enable population health improvement.

The document should emphasize health promotion and prevention to a greater extent. There is evidence to support the role of nurses in promotion of healthy life-styles, for example in school health programs. Every contact that a nurse has with a person is an opportunity to share health prevention, advice and information. This includes addressing issues such as smoking cessation, alcohol consumption, diet and nutrition, weight control and management, salt and sugar intake and individual and family health and lifestyles generally.

The WHO High Level Commission on NCDs is seeking innovative and evidence-based recommendations to achieve target 3.4. We would like to point out that innovation encompasses not only new vaccines, medicines and digitalized technologies. Innovation should be viewed more broadly to encompass organizational design for improved healthcare delivery. There is increasing emphasis on strengthening primary health care through

multidisciplinary teams. Nurses work as part of multidisciplinary teams. At present nurses are frequently and increasingly leading such teams. There is increasing evidence that nurses working in advanced roles provide effective health promotion, prevention and management of chronic and long-term conditions. This is an important development and innovation in organizational approaches and their evaluation should be encouraged in the NCD report.

Nurses provide specialist advice and support for people living with chronic and long-term conditions including arthritis, cancer, COPD, heart disease, diabetes, aids, and mental health issues. Nurses provide help and support to people to manage these conditions, maintain maximum independence and engage in activities of daily living. For individuals with complex conditions and comorbidities, nurses provide support through innovative organizational models such as case management.

Questions for consultation

1. Are there issues or strategies that have been overlooked in the Commission's draft report?

The role of the health workforce seems to have been overlooked in the Commission's draft report. The health workforce has an enormous contribution to make in both managing and preventing NCDs and needs to be a central part of the NCD strategy. There are more than 40 million health professionals who can bring their education, skills and commitment to the task and help close the gap between the great ambitions of the NCD strategy and action on the ground to achieve results.

The over 20 million nurses and midwives can make 3 major contributions: 1. Managing the care of people with NCDs. 2. Promotion of health, prevention of disease and early detection 3. Working with and supporting local communities on health promotion and prevention.

2. How can your organisation contribute to support the actions proposed in the report?

The ENRF mission is to promote and encourage nursing research as an element of professional excellence. Investing in nursing research is critical to developing and evaluating improved interventions in the prevention, promotion, early detection and control of NCDs.

3. What are the potential barriers/enablers to the success of the draft report?

Specific enablers to the success of the draft report include investment in the health and nursing workforce that will improve individual and population health include:

- Invest in quality education and training services at both undergraduate and post graduate levels to facilitate improved interventions in the prevention, promotion, early detection and control of NCDs.
- Invest in research on both effectiveness and experiences of interventions to prevent, promote, detect early and control NCDs.
- Support to enable nurses to work to their full scope of practice and work in advanced and extended roles. This may require modernising regulatory frameworks to support nurses' broader decision-making authority.
- Grow the size of the nursing workforce generally and especially support career development to enable nurses to work in specialist and advanced roles.
- Include, appoint to and strengthen the contribution of nursing leaders in senior policy and evidence based programme decision making.
- Support nurses with technology and access to information.
- Ensure decent and fair work and respectful and supportive working conditions for all nurses.