

**Government of Pakistan
Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division
Press Release**

Dr. Sania Unites Health Leaders Around Action on Biggest Killers and Impoverishing Diseases



September 9, 2019- Geneva: Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) thanked Dr Sania Nishtar today for her outstanding work in leading the WHO Independent High-level Global Commission on Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs). The announcement came at the final meeting of the Commission held on 9 September 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland.

The Commission, is co-chaired by President Tabaré Vázquez of Uruguay; President Sauli Niinistö of Finland; President Maithripala Sirisena of Sri Lanka; Minister Veronika Skvortsova of Russia and Dr. Sania Nishtar, federal minister, government of Pakistan. Prominent global health leaders are on the commission, which was established in October 2017. The commission's aim was to identify innovative ways to curb the world's biggest causes of death and extend life expectancy for millions of people.

“We need leaders to unite and take action to tackle the biggest killers of people. NCDs are the leading cause of medical impoverishment. They lead to catastrophic health expenditures and many who can't afford forego healthcare” said Dr. Sania Nishtar, Special Assistant to the Prime

Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection. “Progress is possible and if we don’t take action we’re going to see already fragile health systems across the world collapse.”

Collectively, NCDs (mainly cancer, diabetes, lung and heart diseases) kill 41 million people annually, accounting for 71% of all deaths globally, 15 million of which occur between the ages of 30 and 70 years. Low- and middle-income countries are particularly affected by NCDs, with 4 out of 5 premature deaths from NCDs occurring in these countries.

The Commission’s first report, launched on 1 June 2018, demanded high-level political commitment from all world leaders to redouble efforts to meet the Sustainable Development Goals target to reduce premature death from NCDs by one-third by 2030 and to promote mental health and wellbeing.

The Commission’s second and final report will be launched on 11 December 2019 in Muscat, Oman, during the high-level segment of the WHO Global Meeting on NCDs and Mental Health. The second report will call on world leaders to increase their political leadership for the development of national responses for the prevention and treatment of NCDs, include NCDs in social protection schemes and benefit packages for universal health coverage, promote partnerships for the public good, and establish a voluntary multi-donor trust fund to support low- and lower-middle income countries in developing national NCD responses.

“WHO was founded 70 years ago on the conviction that health is a human right to be enjoyed by all people, and not a privilege for the few,” WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. “The recommendations of these reports are an important step towards realizing that right by preventing the suffering and death caused by NCDs.”

Dr Tedros concluded, “I thank Sania Nishtar for her outstanding leadership in setting out the strategic directions for the work of the Commission. I wish to take this opportunity to express my great appreciation for an outstanding job done. Sania’s commitment to working better together, characterized by innovative ideas and a sense of urgency, is helping to shape a WHO that responds to our changing world.”