



**United Nations consultation on disease prevention and control
red-flags interference by industries with vested interests as
major drag on public health progress in advance of September meeting of heads of state**

New York City, USA (May 2, 2025)—Bill Jeffery, Executive Director and General Legal Counsel of the Centre for Health Science and Law made the following statement on the UN Headquarters in New York:

“Today, UN officials conferred with member states, civil society organizations, and issue experts from around the world about how to better prevent and treat cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases.

The 300+ consultation participants exhibited encouragingly sustained interest, but revealed shockingly little progress had been made since even before the first such meeting was held in 2011.

As a participant in our meetings of representatives of heads of state and five preparatory consultations in the past decade-and-a-half, I have never heard more from speakers frustrated with interference in progress by commercial industries with conflicts of interests. Even speakers that are heavily or completely funded by, for instance, pharmaceutical and alcohol industries downplayed those connections.

Now is the time for real dedication to ambitious national law reform and smarter public spending, especially at a time of so much chaos and economic uncertainty.

Some leadership might come from Canada’s new federal government which was elected earlier in the week. The [election platform of the new federal government](#) committed to the following:

"If the United States no longer wants to lead, Canada will.

A Mark Carney-led government will:

- *Restore Canada’s diplomatic presence abroad through a new, full foreign policy. (p. 20)...*
- *Leverage Canadian expertise to solve global problems – including leveraging our tech ecosystem – with increased funding to accelerate progress on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).*
- *Use Canada’s G7 Presidency to catalyze action in defence of our values, including working to protect the rules-based international order from those who want to destroy it." (p. 21)...*
- *Launch a Task Force for Public Health Care Innovation to invest and scale up made-in-Canada public health care solutions (p. 25)..."*

About the Centre for Health Science and Law: CHSL is a national health advocacy organization focussed on food issues. Since 1997, Bill Jeffery has advocated law and policy reform to protect public health nutrition in Canada and internationally. CHSL is accredited by the United Nations Economic and Social Council. He can be reached at BillJeffery@HealthScienceAndLaw.ca or mobile/WhatsApp 1-613-565-2140. The Centre for Health Science and Law presented two statements in New York on behalf of alliances of civil society organizations (appended). See UN Web TV recordings of sessions on [prevention](#) and [rights-based treatment](#).

Statement by Bill Jeffery of the Centre for Health Science and Law
on **behalf of 145 NGO accredited by the United Nations** orally and by email
Ensuring the Primacy of the Right to Health, Prevention, and Conflict-of-Interest Safeguards
at the 4th United Nations High-Level Meeting on the
Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases
United Nations Headquarters, New York
May 2, 2025

I am summarizing a longer joint-statement endorsed, so far, by 145 ECOSOC-accredited organizations that is available at: <https://www.healthscienceandlaw.ca/>

80% of cardiovascular disease and diabetes and 40% of cancers are preventable. Universal access to high-quality health care will be more easily achieved if NCDs are effectively prevented before requiring expensive treatment.

Progress takes time, but too much human potential is sacrificed when governments indulge delays lasting decades and even generations.

Full and equitable realization of all human rights can be measured by optimizing [healthy life expectancy, which now ranges from national averages of 44 years to 74 years](#) and

Consider the following in future national actions to reduce rates of non-communicable disease:

1. Ensure the primacy of the actionable right to health, food, water, shelter, other fundamental human rights, and the collective right to development. According to WHO, Harvard School of Public Health, *Lancet* commissions, and other experts, of approximately 60 million deaths annually, half are attributable tobacco, food, alcohol, pesticides and toxic chemicals, and breastmilk substitutes, and inadequate critical water infrastructure.
2. Adopt a Code-of-Conduct for engaging with civil society as urged by 421 mainly ECOSOC-accredited NGOs calling for conflict-of-interest safeguards, ensuring access to information, a UN lobbying registry, and access to so many UN negotiations secreted from public view. See: <http://tinyurl.com/UNConduct>
3. Specifically mandate reliable consumer warning labels about the NCD impact of commercially traded products and services, especially food, alcohol, tobacco, fossil fuels and machines they power, the true costs of which equate to half of the global *commercial* economy. Of the [US\\$101 trillion global economy](#), the purchase price and externalized harm to health and the environment of many of these products is equivalent to half of the global *commercial economy*, with most of the burden borne by the public sector. Likewise, national economic performance should be measured using true cost accounting.
4. Restore the solidarity of UN member states to raise Official Development Assistance to 0.7% of Gross National Income, a 1969 recommendation of former Canadian Prime Minister Lester Pearson's [United Nations Commission](#) and current [target #17.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals](#).
5. Financially support civil society NCD advocacy for on-going and formal annual evaluation and accountability for progress, appointed at arm's length with security of tenure until 2030.

Statement by Kyla Young, MSc, JD of the Centre for Health Science and Law
by email on behalf of

Framework Convention on Global Health Alliance
at the 4th United Nations High-Level Meeting on the
Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases
United Nations Headquarters, New York
May 2, 2025

Thank you very much to the chair. My name is Kyla Young, and I am representing the Centre for Health Science and Law, a Canadian nonprofit organization which is a member of the Framework Convention on Global Health Alliance.

The Alliance is a Geneva-based global coalition of more than 100 NGOs, experts, and people, urge United Nations member states to build on the previous Political Declaration on the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Disease in [2011](#), [2014](#), and [2018](#) and be mindful of the [2019](#) Political Declaration on Universal Health Coverage.

According to the World Health Organization, [non-communicable cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and respiratory diseases cause three-quarters of deaths](#) worldwide and are largely preventable. In communities with scarce health care resources, preventing all diseases and injuries to the fullest extent possible is an essential component of an effective, and affordable system of universal health care and health protection systems. As world leaders have come together and agreed on a global treaty to protect against pandemics like COVID-19, they should recognize that a treaty could be a powerful instrument for addressing NCDs.

Civil society organizations are proposing one such treaty, the *Framework Convention on Global Health*, which would be grounded in human rights and aimed at national and global health equity. Its power could help establish a benchmark for national governments worldwide to advance a human right of everyone to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, as asserted in the *Constitution of the World Health Organization*.

Such a *Convention* should underscore the importance of safeguarding health equity, community accountability, and the primacy of the human right to health. It should stress measures to recognize and redress the [social determinants of health](#) including health protection law, policy and public finance decisions governing domains outside of traditional health care systems.

Member states should formally recognize their support for and their commitments to realizing the human right to health to the full extent of their economic, technical, and fiscal capacities and make full use of their legal and regulatory authority to enforce that right and protect it from abuses by third parties in recognition that all measures to protect the right to health are investments in human health, healthy life expectancy, and the right to prosperous development of populations.

The full statement is available at: <https://fcghalliance.org/>.

Thank you so much for your time.