



DISSEMINATION OF THE EAC NCD STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK REPORT



ZANZIBAR





East African Community

NCD Alliance
East Africa



Burundi



Kenya



Rwanda



Tanzania



Uganda



Zanzibar

EAC REGIONAL STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF NONCOMMUNICABLE DISEASES (2024-2030)

OBJECTIVES



Promote public awareness, community engagement, advocacy and social mobilisation for effective NCD programming.



Strengthen data, surveillance and research on NCDs, for evidence-based decision making.



Improve access to comprehensive (essential and specialised) services for NCDs.



Strengthen leadership, governance, and accountability for effective response to NCDs in the region.



Strengthen domestic and innovative financing approaches for NCD response at regional and national levels.



INTRODUCTION



Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) pose a significant threat to the realization of Agenda 2063—Africa’s vision for an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful continent. By causing premature deaths, reducing productivity, increasing healthcare costs, and depleting human capital, NCDs undermine national and regional development, particularly in vulnerable urban and rural populations. Addressing this burden is therefore not only a health imperative but also a socio-economic and development priority.

In response to the rising burden of NCDs across East Africa, the East African Community (EAC) Regional Strategic Framework for the Prevention and Control of NCDs (2024–2030) has been developed. This framework represents a coordinated regional response aimed at harmonizing NCD policies, improving healthcare services, and catalysing political commitment to tackle NCDs and related conditions including injuries and mental health—across EAC Partner States.

To operationalize this framework, a comprehensive dissemination plan has been developed to ensure the strategy is not confined to institutional shelves, but actively reaches and engages key stakeholders. These include national health departments, civil society organizations, development partners, parliamentary forums, and academic institutions across Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Zanzibar, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Dissemination activities will include; National and regional stakeholder meetings, Webinars and media engagements, Presentations at policy and technical forums, Direct policy dialogues with key decision-makers. Initial dissemination begun in Uganda through a half-day multi-stakeholder meeting, followed by similar country-level sessions led by national alliances. The EAC Secretariat, in collaboration with regional and national actors, will spearhead the advocacy and resource mobilization needed to implement the framework.

Objectives of the Workshop

The Zanzibar dissemination of the East African Community (EAC) Regional Strategic Framework for Prevention and Control of NCDs (2024–2030) has served as both an awareness-raising platform and a consultative forum.

The workshop had the following key objectives:



Raise awareness

Among stakeholders in Zanzibar and mainland Tanzania about the EAC Regional NCD Strategic Framework, its goals, and its relevance to national and subnational NCD responses.



Mobilize key stakeholders

Across government, civil society, academia, and communities to support the implementation of the framework and promote its integration into ongoing health initiatives.



Encourage open reflection and recommendation-sharing

On how the framework can inform future NCD advocacy, service delivery, and governance efforts within Tanzania and across East Africa.



Perspectives from the Host Alliance



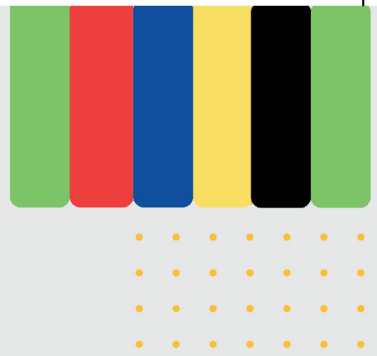
Perspective from Mr. Majaliwa Louis, Board Chair – Zanzibar NCD Alliance (ZNCDA)

Mr. Louis, the Board Chair of the Zanzibar NCD Alliance, officially opened the dissemination workshop by warmly welcoming all participants to the event. In his address, he provided a brief overview of the NCD situation in Zanzibar, noting the increasing burden of diseases such as diabetes and cancer. He emphasized the urgency of multi-stakeholder engagement in reversing the rising tide of NCD-related morbidity and mortality in the islands. He also noted the increasing burden of NCDs like Diabetes, Hypertension and cancer in Zanzibar and greater Tanzania.

He also introduced the Zanzibar NCD Alliance, highlighting its unique structure as a network of member associations working in the NCD space—including cancer and diabetes associations.

Mr. Louis concluded his remarks with an inclusive message of solidarity, expressing deep gratitude for the opportunity to host the dissemination and reaffirming ZNCDA's commitment to regional collaboration on NCD control.

Perspectives from the ECSA - Director General



**Perspective from
Mr. Ntuli Kapologwe,
Representative – Director
General of ECSA-HC (East,
Central and Southern
Africa Health Community)**

Representing the East, Central and Southern Africa Health Community (ECSA-HC), Mr. Ntuli expressed appreciation for the opportunity to be part of the dissemination event and reiterated ECSA-HC’s firm commitment to the regional fight against NCDs. He underscored that non-communicable diseases are now among the leading causes of death across Africa, yet most of them are preventable and controllable. Mr. Ntuli shared that in recognition of this growing burden, an extraordinary EAC meeting on sustainable NCD financing will be held from 15-16th July, 2025, focusing on strategies to mobilize resources and improve investment in NCD prevention and care. He highlighted a World Bank-supported initiative to fight cancer and emphasized the importance of increasing domestic funding as a key enabler for sustainable NCD programming in the region. He further outlined several emerging funding opportunities, stressing that success will depend on strong partnerships across sectors. Mr. Ntuli concluded by reaffirming ECSA-HC’s dedication to capacity building and its continued collaboration with member states and stakeholders to advance regional NCD goals.

Perspectives from the EANCDA - Pres Elect



**Perspective from
Dr. Susan Nakireka,
President-Elect – NCD
Alliance East Africa
(EANCDA)**

Dr. Nakireka took the opportunity to offer a background on the development of the EAC Regional Strategic Framework for NCDs (2024–2030), emphasizing EANCDA’s key role in supporting its formulation. She also acknowledged the critical financial and technical support received from the World Diabetes Foundation (WDF) and CISU, both of whom were instrumental in making the Zanzibar dissemination possible.

In her closing, Dr. Nakireka issued a strong call to action, urging all regional partners and governments to support and operationalize the Framework across their national contexts. She emphasized that the Framework’s success depends on coordinated efforts, sustained political will, and meaningful civil society engagement throughout the region.

Perspectives from the Chief Guest



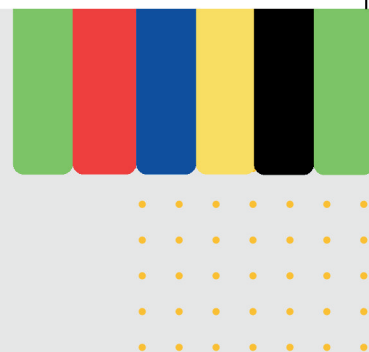
Perspective from Hon. Nassor Ahmed Mazrui

Minister of Health – Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar

In his address, the Minister reflected on the urgent state of NCDs across East Africa, citing that 40% of all deaths in Zanzibar are now attributed to NCDs—a statistic he described as both shocking and deeply concerning.

He carefully walked participants through the five strategic objectives of the EAC Framework, placing particular emphasis on Objective 5: “Strengthening domestic and innovative financing approaches for NCD response at regional and national levels.” He noted this as the most pressing pillar, given the consistent challenge of underfunding and the competition for resources with communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

Drawing from personal experience, the Minister shared how his own exposure to the realities of NCDs opened his eyes to their silent but devastating impact on communities.



He announced that the Zanzibar government has committed to increasing funding for NCD prevention and care and highlighted several key policy actions already underway:

- The rollout of a national patient enrollment scheme for individuals living with NCDs
- A recently launched Community Health Workers (CHW) initiative, operational since 1st July 2025, designed to provide real-time NCD data to the government
- A renewed focus on primary health care (PHC) as the foundation for NCD service delivery

He firmly committed that the Ministry of Health in Zanzibar will adopt the Framework and ensure it becomes part of all future efforts to tackle NCDs across the islands.

Perspectives from EANCDA - Pres



Perspective from Prof. Kaushik Ramaiya, President – NCD Alliance East Africa (EANCDA)

He shared that the journey to this Framework began on 19th July 2019, and has since taken five years of dedicated regional consultations, technical input, and stakeholder engagement to reach this milestone. He highlighted the strategic rollout of the Framework, which was:

- Launched in Rwanda, Feb 2025,
- First disseminated in Uganda – May 2025.

During his presentation, the president provided a comprehensive overview of the 2024 Benchmark survey results, placing them in context by comparing them with the findings from the 2014 and 2018 surveys. He used a tabulated format to illustrate the progression and trends across the three survey periods.

The 2014 survey was designed to understand and assess the response to Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in five countries, specifically from the perspective of civil society organizations.

This initial assessment established a baseline for how civil society was engaging with NCD challenges at the national level.



Building on this, the 2018 survey focused on evaluating the actions taken for NCD prevention and control, particularly in light of the commitments made in the 2011 UN Political Declaration on NCDs and the WHO Global Action Plan 2013–2020. This survey aimed to measure the extent to which countries were translating international commitments into concrete national actions.

The 2024 survey took this analysis further by examining how countries have adopted, contextualized, and implemented NCD prevention and control measures. It also assessed the progress made in implementing the WHO Global Action Plan. Notably, the 2024 results show that all six countries surveyed now include NCDs in their national development and health plans, and have established dedicated NCD units or departments within their health ministries.

Despite these advances, the president highlighted ongoing challenges. Many countries continue to struggle with formal evaluation mechanisms to assess the implementation of their national NCD strategies or action plans. Additionally, the establishment of national multisectoral commissions or agencies to coordinate NCD engagement across different sectors remains a significant hurdle.

Overall, the survey results reflect meaningful progress in policy integration and institutional development for NCDs over the past decade. However, they also underscore the need for stronger evaluation frameworks and cross-sectoral coordination to ensure that commitments translate into effective action and improved health outcomes.



Perspectives from the EAC



Perspective from Mr. Itete Karagire, Representative – East African Community (EAC) Secretariat

Mr. Itete Karagire, representing the EAC Secretariat, opened by restating the vision of the EAC Framework: *A healthy and prosperous East African population, free of preventable non-communicable diseases.*

Mr. Itete emphasized that NCDs continue to place significant strain on already overstretched health systems across the region. He explained that the Framework offers a coordinated, evidence-based path for countries to respond through harmonized policies, shared resources, and joint commitments.

He drew attention to two key regional policy documents:

1. EAC Health Investment Priority Framework (2018–2028)

2. EAC Regional Health Strategic Plan —both of which position NCDs as a central regional health priority.

Mr. Itete also highlighted the role of the six Regional Centres of Excellence (RCoEs) under the EAC framework, noting their contribution to NCD-related capacity building, training, and research across member states.

Perspectives from the NCD Alliance



**Perspective from
Professor Joseph
Mucumbitsi, Past
President – NCD Alliance
East Africa & Board
Member – NCD Alliance**

Professor Joseph, Past President of the NCD Alliance East Africa and current member of the NCD Alliance Board, addressed participants with a forward-looking perspective focused on regional and global NCD advocacy.

He highlighted the importance of aligning regional strategies with global NCD milestones, especially in the lead-up to the upcoming United Nations High-Level Meeting (UN HLM) on NCDs scheduled for September 2025 in New York. Professor urged stakeholders in East Africa to consolidate efforts ahead of this meeting and to push for impactful regional representation at the global stage.

He further recommended that the next UN HLM on NCDs be convened in either 2029 or 2031, as these dates would align more effectively with the global 2030 health targets and allow for meaningful evaluation and course correction.



RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE DISSEMINATION EVENT

1. High-Level Political Engagement and Regional Advocacy

- Write formal letters to EAC Partner States to support their preparation for the UN High-Level Meeting on NCDs (September 2025).
- Develop a regional resolution on how to engage and mobilize member states ahead of the UN HLM.
- Collaborate with partners to reach relevant ministries on global NCD commitments.
- Appoint a regional champion to represent East Africa and deliver a single, unified statement at the UN HLM.
- Identify country-level NCD ambassadors to drive community outreach and visibility.
- Facilitate official high-level engagement with the Chairperson of the EAC on NCDs through a formal regional meeting.
- Institutionalize high-level support for NCD advocacy at the EAC Summit level.



2. Domestic and Innovative Financing

- Make innovative and domestic financing for NCDs a top regional priority.
- Advocate for a dedicated NCD line item in the EAC budget to support implementation.
- Promote sustainable and cost-effective financing models.
- Push for better resource alignment and investment in strategic prevention measures

3. Private Sector Influence and Regulation

- Monitor and expose commercial industry practices that undermine NCD control.
- Strengthen regional advocacy by establishing an East African Tobacco Alliance.
- Encourage the development of stronger regulatory frameworks to counteract commercial interference in health policy.



4. Policy Implementation and Strategic Alignment

- Encourage the integration of the EAC Framework into national and stakeholder implementation plans.
- Disseminate the Framework more actively within the EAC Secretariat and related institutions.
- Focus advocacy on regional-level legislative instruments for stronger enforcement.
- Identify and address strategic gaps within the Framework for future revisions.
- Develop an evaluation tool aligned with the Framework, and conduct a baseline assessment to guide monitoring and learning.
- Establish and strengthen technical working groups (TWGs) on NCDs at the EAC Secretariat.
- Create a Regional Expert Working Group (EWG) to support the NCD TWGs and provide specialized policy and research guidance.



5. Community Engagement and Communication

- Simplify NCD terminology and messages to increase community understanding and reduce stigma.
- Promote culturally relevant physical activity initiatives, drawing from Rwanda's success.
- Foster a culture of prevention through public education and social mobilization.
- Create healthier environments in schools, workplaces, and public spaces.
- Engage local champions and ambassadors to amplify community-level advocacy.



6. Service Delivery and Traditional Integration

- Prioritize primary health care (PHC) as a foundation for NCD screening, treatment, and follow-up.
- Integrate traditional medicine and healing practices into NCD programs where culturally relevant.
- Scale up and share best-buy NCD interventions across all EAC countries to ensure knowledge transfer and evidence-based action.



KEY CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED DURING THE DISSEMINATION

As highlighted by the attendees

The workshop highlighted several barriers that continue to hinder effective NCD prevention and control in the region.

These challenges are categorized under five major thematic areas for clarity and strategic response.



Political Will, Leadership, and Coordination

- Persistent lack of political commitment to prioritize NCDs across several EAC Partner States.
- The EAC regional budget does not allocate specific funding to NCD-related work.
- The NCD space is fragmented, with too many actors working in silos, leading to potential duplication of roles and activities.
- Tobacco industry influence remains a major barrier to advancing NCD policies, due to their economic and political leverage over governments.
- Efforts to advocate for NCDs at regional legislative levels are still insufficient or underutilized.



Policy Gaps and Weak Legal Frameworks

- Tanzania currently lacks Tobacco legislation aligned with WHO standards, requiring targeted support and engagement.
- The EAC Framework lacks detailed focus on mobility and road safety, despite growing concerns.
- Most EAC countries do not have functional systems to follow up on accidents and injury-related NCD risk, as highlighted in both Tanzania and Zanzibar



Health System Limitations

- Mental health services are not yet fully integrated into primary health care (PHC) systems.
- Stroke and NCD-related complications are increasing, particularly in Zanzibar, due to poor integration of NCD services.
- Health facilities face a serious lack of quality care, including gaps in patient navigation systems and follow-up mechanisms.
- There is insufficient capacity at PHC level to provide holistic NCD care.



Community Awareness and Prevention

- Low public awareness of NCDs persists across many East African communities.
- Issues like stress and mental health are not yet widely recognized as key contributors to NCDs, resulting in underdiagnosis and low prioritization.



Monitoring, Integration, and Accountability

- There is a lack of real-time monitoring systems to track NCD interventions and outcomes, especially in mental health and injury. This was noted in the lack of a evaluation tool for the framework
- NCD integration into broader public health programming is inconsistent across the region.



Closing Remarks by Dr. Salim N. Salim

**Director for Preventive service
and Health - MOH (Zanzibar)**

The workshop was officially closed by Dr. Salim, representing the Ministry of Health of Zanzibar. He echoed the powerful message earlier delivered by the Hon. Minister and applauded the organizers for convening such a timely and high-level engagement.

Dr. Mark highlighted the staggering mortality rates of women in Sub-Saharan Africa due to cervical cancer, calling it a major wake-up call for the region.

He emphasized that countries must move beyond discussion and put in place quick and long-term policy solutions that directly address the current NCD burden.



THANK YOU



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