

UN Declaration seals global commitment to oral health and NCD action

Adoption marks a new phase for oral health in the global NCD response

Geneva, 16 December 2025 – FDI World Dental Federation (FDI) welcomes the formal adoption of the Political Declaration of the Fourth High-level Meeting on the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs) and the Promotion of Mental Health and Well-being (HLM4) by the United Nations General Assembly. The decision brings to a close a process shaped by sustained, strategic civil society-led advocacy and strong support from leaders around the world.

The adopted Declaration marks a historic breakthrough for oral health. For the first time in a United Nations High-level Meeting, oral health is explicitly recognized in both the preambular and operative sections of the text. The Declaration acknowledges the global burden of oral conditions, their shared risk factors with other NCDs, and the urgent need to scale up access to essential oral healthcare as part of universal health coverage.

The Political Declaration reaffirms oral health as an integral component of overall health and well-being. By strengthening commitments to prevent and control NCDs through integrated, people-centred approaches, it creates new opportunities to address oral diseases alongside other NCDs, tackle shared risk factors, and build stronger health systems. The Declaration also reinforces the importance of prevention, equity, and access to essential health services, which are key priorities for improving oral health outcomes worldwide.

This achievement reflects more than a decade of sustained advocacy by the oral health community, including FDI and its members and partners. “This adoption is a defining moment for global oral health,” said Asst. Prof. Dr Nikolai Sharkov, FDI President. “Despite delays and political challenges, the international community has now formally recognized oral diseases as part of the NCD agenda. It affirms that oral health is fundamental to overall health, equity, and sustainable development, and must be fully integrated into national NCD strategies and health systems.”

Beyond oral health, the Political Declaration delivers a set of new global and tracer targets, which for the first time provide a shared reference point for monitoring progress and strengthening accountability across countries. These include ambitious fast-track targets to be achieved by 2030, such as:

- 150 million fewer tobacco users;
- 150 million more people with controlled hypertension; and
- 150 million more people with access to mental health care.

The Declaration also includes commitments on regulating e-cigarettes and novel tobacco products, restricting the marketing of unhealthy foods to children, implementing front-of-pack nutrition labelling, and eliminating industrially produced trans fats. Mental health and access to affordable medicines and technologies are addressed extensively throughout the text.

At the same time, FDI notes that compared with earlier drafts, the scope of the Declaration was weakened in certain areas, particularly on prevention, health taxes, and the explicit recognition of civil society's role. These shortcomings underscore the continued influence of commercial interests linked to unhealthy commodities and highlight the need for continuous civil society-led mechanisms for accountability and vigilance. The adoption of the HLM4 Political Declaration concludes months of negotiations and broad civil society engagement. It now provides a formal mandate for governments, international organizations, and stakeholders to translate political commitments into concrete national action.

“For FDI and the global oral health community, this is both an endpoint and a starting point,” added the FDI President. “We will use this Declaration as a powerful advocacy tool to support our members, hold governments accountable, and accelerate progress on oral health as an integral part of the global response to NCDs and mental health.”

FDI recognizes the importance of leveraging this momentum to secure further gains, particularly in the lead-up to the 2027 UN High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage. FDI will continue to advance oral health on the global stage while actively exploring opportunities to elevate these new and existing commitments at regional and national levels.

— ENDS —

Notes to Editors:

The full text of the Political Declaration is [available here](#).

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About FDI World Dental Federation (FDI)

FDI World Dental Federation is the leading global voice of the dental profession and envisions a world with optimal oral health. It serves as the principal representative body for over 1 million dentists worldwide. Its membership includes some 200 national dental associations and specialist groups in over 130 countries. www.fdiworldddental.org

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