

# MOBILISING FOR ACTION

## Opportunities for civil society advocacy at the 2025 United Nations High-Level Meeting on NCDs

A United Nations High-Level Meeting (UNHLM) is a rare and significant event, convened infrequently to address the most urgent global challenges; not every disease or development goal is afforded this level of attention, highlighting the critical importance of the issues on its agenda. As such, the 2025 United Nations High-Level Meeting on Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs) offers a pivotal opportunity to drive political commitment and action on NCDs.

Understanding the UNHLM process allows national and regional civil society advocates to leverage this opportunity successfully and advocate for robust commitments to accelerate the adoption and implementation of evidence-based NCD policies and regulations in country.

**What is a UNHLM and why does it matter?**

- A **multilateral process** for important global issues
- Hosted by the **UN General Assembly (UNGA)** consisting of 193 UN Member States
- All national governments are engaged at the **highest political level**
- HLMs on health issues **elevate health** from the technical to political realm
- Opportunity to focus attention, review progress and **agree the way forward**
- Spurs consensus on **international cooperation**

### Key actors at play

#### At the UN



The **“Co-facilitators”** lead the drafting and negotiations of the Modalities Resolution and the Political Declaration. The two diplomats are appointed to the post by the UNGA President and the country selection seeks to balance different geographies and income levels.

*\*\*Please note that for the 2025 HLM on NCDs St Vincent and the Grenadines and Luxembourg have been appointed.*



**Missions to the UN** represent Member States in New York and Geneva. During intergovernmental negotiations countries often organise themselves in political, geographic or economic blocs e.g., G77, EU, African regional group.

#### In Capitals



Missions to the UN receive broad directives from **Ministries of Foreign Affairs** and/or Departments of International Affairs at the Ministry of Health.

*Please see the pocket guide on Building Strategic Relationships with UN missions [here](#).*

### The UNHLM process in a nutshell

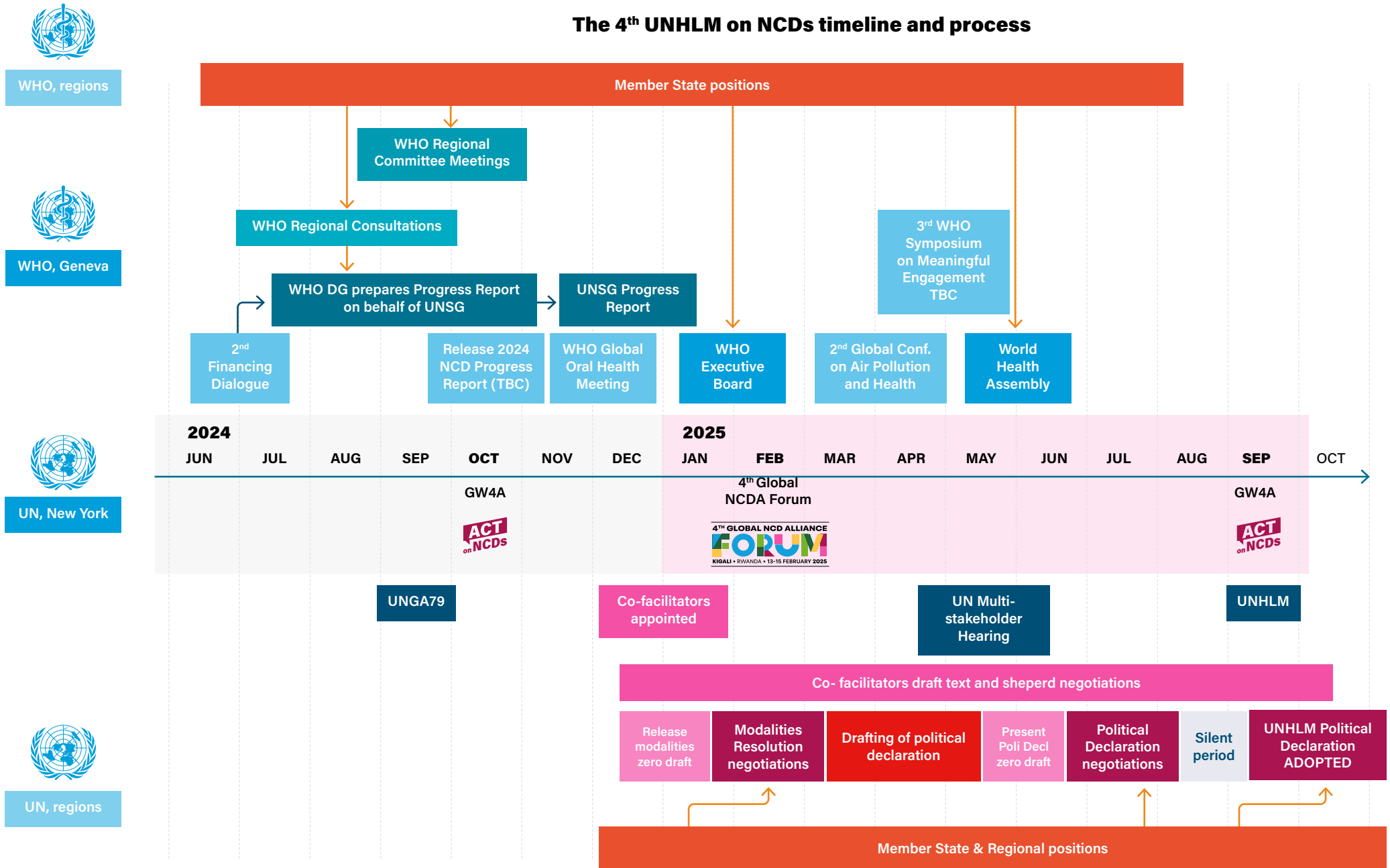
Preparations for a UNHLM begin at least **1,5 years ahead** of the meeting and take place in Geneva and WHO’s six regions before the process formally moves to the United Nations in New York. Major milestones in this process include:

- The **UN Secretary General’s report** (UNSG report) which synthesises current status-quo and provides recommendations from various WHO-led preparatory processes that inform the zero-draft Political Declaration.
- The **Modalities Resolution** which establishes the scope and format of the meeting.
- UN Multistakeholder Hearing** which presents an opportunity for civil society to formally engage with the process. The recommendations of this meeting will feed into the negotiations on the Political Declaration and provide the biggest collective advocacy opportunity for the NCD community.
- The **Political Declaration** as the key outcome document negotiated by permanent missions in NYC, outlining global commitments representing consensus for a way forward among UN Member States.

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**NCD KEY ADVOCACY PRIORITIES**  
Learn more about NCD Alliance’s advocacy priorities for the UN High-Level Meeting [here](#).

## The 4<sup>th</sup> UNHLM on NCDs timeline and process



\*Please note that this is simplified version showing key processes and milestones only. The timings of key milestones shown are approximate according to information available at the time of publication.

## The Modalities Resolution

The **agenda, topics, date, and participants** for the UNHLM are outlined in the **'Modalities Resolution,'** a document negotiated by Member States. It may also direct the Office of the President of the General Assembly (OPGA) to convene multistakeholder hearings to involve civil society, people living with NCDs, youth, philanthropic foundations, academia, and the private sector. The modalities resolution usually gets **finalised by the end of February.**

### ADVOCACY TIP

The NCD Alliance monitors this process to ensure the resolution supports meaningful civil society engagement, including a UN Multistakeholder Hearing. National advocates can contribute by engaging their UN Mission to push for strong commitments in the resolution.

## The main outcome - the Political Declaration

The UNSG Report, decisions from the WHO Executive Board and World Health Assembly, and input from a UN Multistakeholder Hearing inform the development of a **'zero-draft' Political Declaration** (usually released around May).

Negotiations on the final text usually take place between May-July and end with a 'silence procedure,' where Member States can raise any red-line objections. Co-facilitators then work to resolve any final disputes before the declaration is **formally adopted at the UNHLM in September.**

### ADVOCACY TIP

Drafting the Political Declaration is a closed Member State process, but civil society can influence it by engaging with Member States (via UN Missions) to push for inclusion of specific policy priorities and for stretching commitments to action. The NCD Alliance supports this by preparing text recommendations aligned with campaign priorities and responses to drafts of the texts, which advocates can share with UN Missions.

## TIPS FOR ENGAGING WITH THE HIGH-LEVEL MEETING PROCESS

### Get informed

Find out how your country organises its participation in the UNHLM process. As part of which political bloc does your country negotiate? What are the regional NCD issues that are of priority to your country and region? Who are the key contacts at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the UN Mission in New York?

### Identify opportunities for formal engagement

Some governments open civil society spots as part of their formal delegation to attend the HLM. Find out if your country is open to civil society representation, or if there are any other avenues in which your government is seeking civil society input to the process.

### Start early

The UNHLM process is fluid and requires civil society advocates to cultivate relationships with key contacts at MoFA, MoH and their UN Mission early to be able to engage with them when it matters; i.e. during the negotiations for the Modalities Resolution (Jan-Feb) and most importantly negotiations for the Political Declaration (May-July). Reach out to your government representatives and your missions early.

### Engage with the UN Multistakeholder Hearing

If possible, plan to engage your missions around the Multistakeholder Hearing. For those advocates present in NYC, the hearing also offers a great opportunity for national advocates to schedule in-person meetings with their UN Mission representatives.

### Advocate

The goal is to see champion countries actively engage and advocate for inclusion of specific policy priorities in the Political Declaration, and public to show support and call for their country to lead on NCDs. Use available tools and resources to identify political champions in your country or regions and build momentum by raising awareness with the general public through media campaigns. It is important that advocates also request that their country is represented at the highest political level; i.e. by Heads of State/Heads of Government.

### Stay connected with the NCD Alliance

Stay informed of NCD Alliance updates activities and share your plans for engagement.