UN Group of Friends on the Elimination of Hepatitis  
Information Note

Introduction

In 2015, Hepatitis B virus (HBV) and Hepatitis C virus (HCV) caused over 10 million new infections and 300 million chronic infections, leading to 1.3 million annual deaths from liver disease and liver cancer.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by Member States of the United Nations in 2015, set out a clear vision to promote physical and mental health and well-being and to extend life expectancy for all. It included a commitment to accelerate progress in fighting hepatitis and other communicable diseases and epidemics. Target 3.3 of Agenda 2030’s Sustainable Development Goals specifically highlights the global commitment to end AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combating hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases by 2030.

Despite major progress by many countries towards hepatitis elimination goals, more efforts are needed to facilitate access to hepatitis prevention, testing and treatment and to ensure SDG 3.3 can be achieved by 2030. Several programs that scaled up broad access to hepatitis C testing and curative therapies demonstrated the feasibility of hepatitis C elimination. With sharing lessons learned and forming global partnerships for capacity-building programs, we can ensure catalyzing international efforts to eliminate hepatitis.
On September 20th, 2022, at a UNGA side event held in New York, representatives from 12 countries pledged support to the formation of a Group of Friends on the Elimination of Hepatitis with the view of promoting international cooperation and building momentum for stronger political support towards achieving the 2030 goal.

This Group of Friends will engage with Member States and other relevant stakeholders on means to accelerate progress to eliminate hepatitis and will serve as a platform for exchanging information, best practices, models for innovation and lessons learned.

Structure and Modalities of Work

The Group of Friends on the Elimination of Hepatitis will have a Chair (at the level of Permanent Representative) which will rotate on an annual basis between countries with burdens of HCV and HBV. The Group will be open for membership to all Member States and Observer States of the United Nations. In addition, all observers to the General Assembly are invited to follow its proceedings.

The Group of Friends will be based in New York and the Task Force for Global Health – Coalition for Global Hepatitis Elimination (CGHE) will serve as its Secretariat, in close coordination with the Office of WHO in New York. As Secretariat, the Global Task Force will support the Group’s vision and assist with the facilitation of meetings and events.
The Group of Friends will:

- Meet periodically to exchange information, best practices and lessons learned.
- Provide technical briefings to New York-based experts and provide scientific input to guide their deliberations.
- Engage with relevant stakeholders on the various aspects of hepatitis elimination including advocacy, care strategies, technologies, and options for increasing the feasibility of hepatitis elimination.
- Hold periodic events on hepatitis elimination.
- Consider synergies with other health-related Groups of Friends.