The Africa Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) has validated the Non-Communicable Diseases, Injuries and Mental Health (NCDI/MH) strategy for the period 2022-2026.

The new strategy aims to build and invest in African health systems while promoting collaborations in a multi-sectoral approach toward a “new public health order” in Africa that will help to lessen the effects of current and future pandemics on our lives and livelihoods.

The strategy contains six strategic objectives for Africa’s CDC plan of support for the Member States and of particular relevance for the environmental protection including aligning member states, Regional Economic Communities, and partners to establish and coordinate multi-sectoral action on NCDs.

It also highlights priority interventions to strengthen Member States’ capacity to address social and environmental determinants of NCDs in addition to conventional risk factors.

In addition, it promotes local and regional initiatives targeting risk factors for NCDs in schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods to promote healthy lifestyles early in life.

The five-year continental framework for mental health and non-communicable diseases was launched during a workshop organized by Africa CDC to provide a platform for updating the Member States and other stakeholders on the strategy development process.

The workshop also provided an opportunity for member states and stakeholders to share strategic priorities and the implementation plans for final inputs prior to the launch and discussions for the next steps in the implementation of the strategy

The 42 Member States participated in the workshop including six Ministers of Health from Gambia, Egypt, Botswana, Burundi, Namibia, and Ethiopia representing the 5 regions of the African Union, Africa CDC technical partners as well as civil society organizations representing people living with NCDs.

The strategy comes at a time when Africa CDC has been focusing its efforts on tackling communicable diseases particularly infectious diseases due to the emergence of infectious diseases such as Ebola outbreaks and the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the 2022 World Health Organization (WHO), between 50% and 88% of deaths in seven countries, mostly small island nations, are due to non-communicable diseases.

Africa CDC Director Dr. John Nkengasong revealed that five years ago the Africa CDC governing board endorsed the Africa CDC strategic plan that included both communicable diseases and NCDs.

“We must harness all assets within the African Union Commission to address NCDIs and Mental ill-health to provide additional value in the entire value chain and spectrum of fighting NCDIs and Mental ill health,” said Dr. John Nkengasong.