Code of Conduct for Africa NCD Network Activities

The Africa NCDs Network (ANN) is committed to providing a safe, respectful, inclusive, productive, and welcoming environment for everyone who takes part in our activities. Our work brings together people living with NCDs, civil society, researchers, health professionals, policymakers, youth advocates, and partners from across Africa. It only works when every voice can be heard, and every participant feels safe, and valued. Open, honest discussion that welcomes a diversity of opinions, backgrounds and experiences is at the heart of how we work.

The ANN is also committed to protecting public health policy and advocacy from commercial interests that conflict with the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases across Africa. This Code therefore sets out expectations on both personal conduct and conflicts of interest.

This Code applies to all ANN activities, including but not limited to meetings, conferences, trainings, workshops, side events, and related professional or social gatherings. It also applies to events that ANN co-organizes or co-sponsors with other organizations. It applies to everyone involved: attendees, speakers, moderators, facilitators, partners, funders, volunteers, staff, guests, and others.

All participants are expected to:

- **Respect diversity.** Accept that people differ in age, gender, culture, ethnicity, religion, language, disability, health status, political background, social status, and ability. This includes people living with NCDs, whose lived experience we value and who must never be stigmatized.
- **Respect privacy and personal space,** including the privacy of personal health information shared in the course of discussions.
- **Take part in good faith.** Act fairly and honestly, listen to others, and handle disagreements constructively and courteously.
- **Stand against discrimination and harassment.** The ANN has zero tolerance for discrimination, harassment, bullying, intimidation, and comments or conduct of a sexual nature. Do not promote, encourage, or ignore such behavior by others.
- **Ask for consent in advance** before taking audio-visual recordings, photographs, or sharing quotes or personal stories.
- **Use language that includes.** Avoid jokes, remarks, or images that demean, and use respectful language when speaking about people and communities.

Protecting our work from industry interference

Unhealthy commodity industries, including the tobacco, alcohol, sweetened beverage and ultra-processed food industries, have interests that conflict with the prevention of NCDs. Evidence shows that industry involvement in health policy can delay, weaken or derail measures

such as warning labels, marketing restrictions, and health taxes. To protect the integrity of ANN's work, the following apply at all ANN activities:

1. **No industry sponsorship or funding.** The ANN does not accept sponsorship, funding, gifts, or in-kind support (such as venues, meals, materials or travel) for its activities from the sweetened beverage industry, the ultra-processed food industry, or the tobacco and alcohol industries, or from organizations they own, fund, or control.
2. **No industry branding or promotion.** Logos, products, samples, branded items, advertising, and promotional materials of these industries are not permitted at ANN activities or in ANN materials. This includes food and beverages provided at events, which should be free of such branding and, where possible, promote healthy options.
3. **Industry representatives as participants.** Representatives of these industries, and individuals acting on their behalf, are not invited to take part in ANN activities, and may not present, exhibit, or engage in lobbying or marketing at them.
4. **Front groups and third parties.** This applies equally to trade associations, foundations, consultancies, "corporate social responsibility" initiatives, and other bodies that act on behalf of, or are funded by, these industries.
5. **Declare your interests.** All speakers, facilitators, panelists, and organizers must disclose in advance any financial or other relationship, past or present, with these industries that could be seen as a conflict of interest. If you are unsure, disclose.
6. **Government-led processes.** Where ANN takes part in official, government-led policy processes in which industry is also present, it will engage transparently, on the public record, and without giving up its independence or advocacy positions.
7. **No use of ANN's name.** Participants must not use ANN's name, logo, or activities to promote or give credibility to industry products, brands, or positions.

ANN's approach is guided by the principle of protecting public health policy from commercial and vested interests, in line with Article 5.3 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and WHO guidance on managing conflicts of interest in nutrition programmes.

Raising a concern

If at any time you feel this Code has been violated, or you notice a possible conflict of interest or industry presence at an activity, inform the leading staff present.

The ANN takes all reports seriously and will review them promptly, fairly, and with as much confidentiality as possible. Depending on the situation, action may include a conversation or warning, removal from the activity, informing the person's employer or organization, and restricting future participation in ANN activities. Where an undeclared conflict of interest is found, the ANN may withdraw a speaking role or end a partnership.

No participant will be retaliated against for reporting a concern in good faith. Intentionally filing a false report is itself a violation of this Code.

By signing below, I confirm that I have read and will follow this Code of Conduct.

I also declare that (please tick one):

- ☐ I have **no** financial or other relationship with the sweetened beverage, ultra-processed food, tobacco or alcohol industries, or organizations funded or controlled by them.
- ☐ I **have** a relationship with such industries, which I describe below:

Printed name: _____

Organization: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____