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Mrs Riina Sikkut
Minister of Health
Ministry of Social Affairs
Suur-Ameerika 1
Tallinn 10129
Estonia

Dear Madam,

I would like to extend my sincere thanks for your time and the valuable discussions we had during my recent visit to Estonia, especially the working dinner with you and your team where I was grateful for the frank and open discussions on the topics of mental health, alcohol use, nutrition and physical activity, and the rise of nicotine product use among young people.

I was impressed by Estonia's work to strengthen national health security and its proactive approach to ensuring preparedness for future health emergencies. Your and your team's commitment to learning from past experiences – including the recent experiences of Ukraine – to strengthen preparedness and readiness is remarkable.

Our discussions on the burden of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) were particularly helpful as I think about the development of the second European Programme of Work. Addressing the drivers of NCDs, alongside novel nicotine product use, the growing mental health crisis, screen use, and the impacts of climate change will require strong collaboration, and I look forward to further joint efforts in these areas.

I would also like to express my appreciation for Estonia's support to ensure uninterrupted functioning of the WHO NCD programme upon relocation of the WHO European Office for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases to Copenhagen, Denmark. This work is critical to ensuring continued momentum in addressing NCDs, and I trust Estonia will remain committed to supporting the office in its new location.

Additionally, I want to express my appreciation for Estonia's strong support for the pandemic treaty currently being negotiated by WHO Member States. This treaty presents a critical opportunity to build a safer world for all. My team, through our Head of Country Office, Kristina Köhler, will work proactively with the Ministry of Social Affairs to address disinformation and misinformation challenges.

I look forward to our continued collaboration to improve health outcomes in Estonia and across the WHO European Region.

Yours very truly,

Dr Hans Henri P. Kluge
Regional Director

Copy for information to:

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