In 2015, a landmark high-level meeting of the United Nations General Assembly resulted in a commitment to address non-communicable diseases (NCDs) as a major development challenge. In 2015, the World Health Assembly adopted the World Health Organization Global Action Plan on NCDs, emphasizing whole-of-society approaches to reduce the major drivers of preventable NCDs. The plan also endorsed a global monitoring framework including nine voluntary global targets. FIGURE 39.1 In 2014, a goal to reduce premature mortality from NCDs by one-third was included in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The effective use of law requires collaboration across sectors: government; civil society; academia; health professionals; communities; people affected by cancer or NCDs, their families and caregivers; and, as appropriate, the private sector. Collaboration across different parts of government is also needed, as few problems can be addressed by health ministries acting alone. Addressing cancer and NCDs through law involves engaging with domestic, regional and international legal and governance frameworks, including those dealing with health, human rights, international trade, intellectual property and investment law, environment, and occupational health and safety. It also requires being able to defend against litigation, or threats of litigation, by corporate interests—such as the tobacco, alcohol and food industries—which is becoming increasingly common. FIGURE 39.2 Legal capacity is an essential component of the cancer/NCD workforces.

Law is essential to implement a number of the globally agreed ‘best buys’ for NCDs—the evidence-based interventions considered the most cost-effective and feasible for implementation in low- and lower-income countries.

| Mortality & disability | National impacts | Risk factors for NCDs | 25% reduction of avoidable deaths | 30% reduction of tobacco use | 30% reduction of salt/sodium intake | 18% reduction of death due to alcohol | 10% reduction of physical activity
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<td>50% coverage for drug therapy and vaccines</td>
<td>86% coverage for essential NCD medicines and technologies</td>
<td>25% reduction of premature mortality from NCDs</td>
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FIGURE 39.3 Nine voluntary global targets endorsed by governments in the World Health Organization (WHO): Global Action Plan on NCDs

Policy and legislation are essential to address the burden of cancer globally and locally. The effective use of law to achieve population health goals requires collaboration across sectors.

The Australian Government has successfully defended against three sets of legal challenges to its tobacco plain packaging laws:

- a constitutional challenge in its highest domestic court, an investment treaty claim, and a dispute in the World Trade Organization. These victories demonstrate the power governments have to legislate for public health.

FIGURE 39.2 Targets related to non-communicable diseases in UN Sustainable Development Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Law is essential to implement a number of the globally agreed ‘best buys’ for NCDs—the evidence-based interventions considered the most cost-effective and feasible for implementation in low- and lower-income countries.

| Implement excise taxes and prices on tobacco products | Implement plain/standardized packaging and/or large graphic health warnings on all tobacco packages | Enact and enforce comprehensive bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship | Implement excise taxes and prices on tobacco products | Enact and enforce bans on tobacco availability (via reduced hours of sale) | Enact and enforce restrictions on the physical distribution of tobacco products | Enact and enforce plain/standardized packaging and/or large health warnings on tobacco packages | Enact and enforce comprehensive bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship

FIGURE 39.3 Targets related to non-communicable diseases in UN Sustainable Development Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages