

**Health in Post-2015 NGO Advocacy Group statement to the second intergovernmental session:  
The Political Declaration for the Post-2015 Development Agenda  
February 2015**

**Introduction and overall comment**

A collective vision of the road to 2030 must be anchored in a human rights-based approach and recognize the importance of health and wellbeing for people of all ages and diversities. Achieving the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and wellbeing is an essential prerequisite for the eradication of poverty and the achievement of sustainable human development. Without the realization of the right to health, people of all ages and diversities will not be able to benefit from poverty eradication, the key objective of the post-2015 development agenda, nor the achievement of other goals and targets in the document which are inextricably linked to health, namely: sustainable agriculture, education, gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment, disaster resilience, peaceful societies, and decent work.

For health, we welcome the inclusion of Goal 3 "*Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages*", and targets related to health in other goals. We also wish to note that wherever "health" is mentioned, it refers to physical as well as mental health and wellbeing.

The Declaration should specifically:

**1 Reaffirm the right to health**

**The right to health should be realized through a human rights-based approach that aims to achieve the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health for all, particularly for the most vulnerable, and aims at ensuring access to quality health services and care across the health continuum for all.**

**Rationale**

The right for all people to achieve the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health is affirmed in numerous international human rights instruments, under customary international law. It is restated in the preamble of the Constitution of the World Health Organization, and is noted in outcome documents from numerous UN conferences and high-level meetings. It is a precondition, outcome, and indicator of sustainable development. Moreover, it provides guidance to Member States on their accountability to realize progressively the right to health. Equity, non-discrimination, participation, and that no target be considered met unless met for all groups, should clearly be reflected in the declaration.

**2 Address the social and environmental determinants of health**

**Health and wellbeing for all, at all ages and in a sustainable manner, provides the guiding principle for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals within the post-2015 development agenda. The social determinants of health need to be accounted for to promote wellbeing and quality of life alongside poverty eradication. Progress on each of the goals enhances health equity.**

**Rationale**

Progress to achieve universal health and wellbeing requires a dual approach, with priority also given to both addressing the social determinants of health and accelerating access to quality health care and services. Many key social determinants of health and health inequities lie outside the health care system; health, and the unfair distribution of health, are determined by the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age, as well as inequities in the power, money and resources that give rise to inequities in these conditions of daily life.

All people, regardless of their abilities or social, cultural or physical differences, deserve equal access to health services. The social determinants of health also enable us to emphasize planetary health and the need for all SDGs to have a sustainable development focus. Addressing the environmental determinants of health could yield equally co-beneficial returns in advancing both health and overall sustainable development.

### **3 Place health in the context of post-2015 development agenda**

The Declaration should focus on achieving the right to physical and mental health and wellbeing for all, recognizing the importance of: access to universal health care, access to immunizations and other essential medications, the necessity of strengthening health systems (including systems for the delivery of essential services, particularly, health, education and social protection services), ensuring access to sexual and reproductive health care and the recognition of sexual and reproductive rights, and the importance of all people of all ages, including older people, children and youth, and those with the most vulnerable, special health care needs in policy discourse.

#### **Rationale**

The political Declaration should take note of key health issues going forward such as sexual and reproductive health and rights for all. In addition, the lessons of the last few months, e.g., the outbreaks of Ebola, have shown that vigilance, resilience, and the ability to respond to new and emerging health issues including antimicrobial resistance, is critically important. Microbial agents will require the necessary research to develop new tools and interventions, and urgent action if major epidemics are to be avoided in the next 15 years.

### **4 Promote the need for improved disaggregated data in the political Declaration.**

It is crucial to increase capacity for improved data and surveillance for health. As WHO Director-General Dr. Margaret Chan has stated, “what gets measured gets done.” The Declaration must reaffirm the importance of a data revolution that improves the quality of data, and supports strengthening national monitoring and surveillance capacity. Improved data that can be disaggregated by age, sex, level of income, place of residence, and disability will better enable us to collectively address health inequalities.

#### **Signatories:**

Access Our Medicines

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Framework Convention Alliance (FCA)

The Global Alliance for Surgical, Obstetric, Trauma, and Anaesthesia Care (The G4 Alliance)

Global Health Council

Global Network for Neglected Tropical Diseases

Handicap International

International Agency for Prevention of Blindness

International HIV/AIDS Alliance

International-Lawyers.Org  
International Medical Corps  
International Pediatric Association  
Medicines for Malaria Venture – MMV  
NCD Alliance  
NCD Child  
PATH  
Population Action International  
Sabin Vaccine Institute  
TB Alliance  
Terre Des Hommes  
Union for International Cancer Control  
World Animal Protection  
World Lung Foundation