

The Health in Post-2015 Coalition's response to the UN Secretary General's Synthesis report on post-2015

As a coalition of advocates from health-related non-governmental organizations, engaged in the post-2015 development agenda process, we wish to highlight the following in our response to the UN Secretary General's Synthesis report on post-2015, "The Road to Dignity by 2030: Ending Poverty, Transforming All Lives and Protecting the Planet":

1) The need for a strong health goal and targets based on the right to health

We support a strong post-2015 health goal, as proposed by the UN Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, which addresses the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals as well as new health priorities and challenges, including non-communicable diseases and neglected tropical diseases, and universal coverage and equitable access to comprehensive quality health care – encompassing preventative, diagnostic, curative, rehabilitative and palliative services. Central to maximizing healthy lives and wellbeing for all at all ages is realizing the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and equity in health outcomes.

We note that the Synthesis report broadly builds on the Outcome Document of the Open Working Group, which calls notably for the post-2015 agenda to address universal health coverage, including access and affordability; end preventable maternal, newborn and child deaths and malnutrition; ensure the availability of essential medicines; realize women's reproductive health and rights; eradicate malaria; realize the vision of a future free of AIDS and tuberculosis; and reduce the burden of non-communicable diseases including mental health and road traffic injuries and neglected tropical diseases.

2) The critical importance of human rights, including sexual rights, youth-friendly services, and combatting stigma and discrimination

The Synthesis report falls short in addressing universal human rights commitments, in particular the right to health. It also doesn't address the critical importance of realizing sexual rights, in particular for adolescents and young people and sexual minorities. The importance of youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services, including for HIV prevention, was identified as a major priority in the twenty-year ICPD review process. In addition, while we note the recognition of 'LGBT people' as advocates whose voices should be engaged, there is no reference to ending stigma, discrimination and criminalization based on sexual orientation and gender identity, which are critical obstacles to realize their right to health.

We call on Member States to work towards the full realization of human rights for all, including women's rights, address the entire spectrum of sexual and reproductive health and rights, including family planning and, in line with the Secretary General's recommendation, ensure all marginalized and excluded groups are reached with the services they need. To realize this, Member States should commit to the removal of punitive laws and promote the adoption of protective laws for the most vulnerable and marginalized groups, to ensure equity, equality, in particular gender equality, and eliminate discrimination, stigmatization and criminalization, including in relation to HIV/AIDS.

3) Including other critical health-related issues to achieve sustainable development

In order to “ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages,” Member States should also critically support and promote:

- strong, inclusive health and community systems, including addressing health workers shortages;
- better health research, training and innovation;
- the social determinants of health;
- improved multi-sectoral action to achieve health and nutrition outcomes, including stronger links between nutrition and health, especially the promotion of breastfeeding, and human health and animal health;
- the promotion and inclusion of mental health and wellbeing;
- the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control as imperative in decreasing the burden of non-communicable diseases; and
- all six World Health Assembly (WHA) global nutrition targets and WHO NCD targets.

This will require increased financial investments from both the public and private sectors. Member States must ensure that these investments achieve the goal of increasing equitable access to quality health care, including access to public and community-based health care workers, for all, without people falling into poverty due to health expenditures

4) Implementation, financing and meaningful civil society engagement

In the run up to September 2015 when the new sustainable development framework will be adopted, we stand ready to work with Member States, UN agencies, the private sector, civil society partners and other stakeholders to further strengthen the goals and targets currently under negotiation and to identify the means of implementation of these. We will also continue to advocate for an inclusive global accountability framework for monitoring the implementation of the new goals, based on concrete and measurable indicators and dedicated financing by governments and the private sector, with full engagement of civil society and communities, including LGBT people and other minorities. The success of the upcoming third International Conference on Financing for Development will be central for the implementation of the post-2015 goals. We welcome the call on donor countries to maintain their ODA commitments, as well as the recognition of shared responsibility of all governments and other development partners in increasing domestic resources to provide health for all. As the UN Secretary General rightly put it, the litmus test will be the implementation of the new agenda. This should be done in a way which “leaves no one behind.”

We thank the UN Secretary General for his contribution to this important post-2015 process and look forward to inclusive and transparent ways of meaningfully engaging civil society as equal partners, as we move forward towards the September 2015 Summit.

Endorsing organizations:

Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine

Africa Japan Forum

AIDS-Fondet

Aids Fonds

Access Our Medicine

Action for Global Health

Center Health Sciences Training Research and Development

Commonwealth Medical Trust

Ecumenical Pharmaceutical Network

Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation

Family Care International

Framework Convention Alliance

Global Health Council

Global Health South/One Voice Campaign

Global Network for Neglected Tropical Diseases

GNP+

Handicap International

Health for All Post-2015

Health Workforce Advocacy Initiative

HelpAge International

International AIDS Vaccine Initiative

International Civil Society Support

International HIV/AIDS Alliance

International Lactation Consultants Association

International Women's Health Coalition

IntraHealth International

Management Sciences for Health

Medicines for Malaria Venture

NCD Alliance

PATH

Pathfinder International

Planned Parenthood Federation of America

Population Action International

Public Health Institute

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The Carolina Global Breastfeeding Institute

The International Association of Applied Psychology

The Psychology Coalition of NGOs

The World Council of Psychotherapy

World Animal Protection

World Lung Foundation