

# WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO/AFRO)

## Support to NEPAD

**Period of Report: July 2007 to June 2008**

Upon her appointment as Director-General of WHO, Dr. Margaret Chan outlined six priorities for WHO, with special emphasis on the Africa region and women's health. The attainment of the highest possible level of health in the Africa region is rife with challenges. These include weak and fragmented health systems; inadequate resource allocation to health systems; limited access to available health services and technologies; poor management of human resources for health; uncoordinated and inconsistent application of policy actions to health determinants; limited capacity for decision-making, recurrent natural and man-made disasters and emergencies; and extreme poverty.

In order to address these challenges, WHO's Africa Regional Office (WHO/AFRO) is committed to the MDGs, as well as the other internationally agreed development goals on health, as the basis for planning, monitoring and evaluating projects and programmes in the region, in line with the NEPAD orientation.

To date, WHO has made significant advances towards achieving the highest possible level of health in Africa, and therefore keeping in line with the NEPAD health strategic objectives, and those of the MDGs:

- The Africa Regional Office strengthened child and adolescent health through partnerships with the African Union (AU), UNICEF, World Bank, DFID, USAID, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Ford Foundation. The Office also established or reinforced partnerships with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention and the following collaborating centres: National Institute for Communicable Diseases (South Africa); *Institut Pasteur de Dakar* (Senegal); *Institut Pasteur de Madagascar*, *Centre International de Recherche Medicale de Franceville* (Gabon); and International Bureau for Animal Resources, *Commission de l'Ocean Indien* (Mauritius).
- Technical support was provided to the East, Central and Southern Africa Health Community to develop a strategic plan and policy briefs on malaria in pregnancy. The global review of the joint WHO/UNICEF/UNFPA statement on female genital mutilation (FGM) provided the opportunity for WHO reiterate its commitment to FGM elimination. The Regional Office assisted the *Gesellschaft fur Technische Zusammenarbeit* (GTZ) to develop their action plan to address FGM among migrant and refugee women. The Gender Analysis Matrix provided six regional economic communities with better planning, programming, advocacy and capacity-building skills. In collaboration with the AU, countries and partners harmonized the African regional nutrition strategy with the nutrition concept note of NEPAD.

- The Regional Office staff also organized or attended a number of partnership meetings. These included the regional meeting on pandemic influenza; the regional workshop on strengthening local production capacity for essential medicines, including antiretrovirals; the continental consultative meeting on scaling up towards universal access to HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care in Africa; UN meeting on the avian flu influenza situation in Africa; the WHO-ADB consultative meeting; the regional economic communities workshop on health financing; and the regional conference on health in the countries of the Horn of Africa.
- The Regional Office strengthened relations with the regional and international media, ensuring visibility and publicity for activities, meetings, conferences, workshops and events organized with WHO, and therefore enhancing advocacy for African health and development.
- The Regional Office collaborated with NEPAD in the high-level intersectoral (health, finance, education, public service permanent secretaries and equivalent) policy consultation on the health workforce agenda; representation at the Global Health Workforce Alliance (GHWA) board for Africa; chairing the Africa health workforce platform steering committee by NEPAD for which AFRO is the secretariat; advocacy with partners for the human resources for health (HRH) agenda including Health Workforce Observatory; and advocating for the inclusion of the HRH component in the AU health strategy.