



2009 ANNUAL MINISTERIAL REVIEW

AMR E-Discussion on Global Public Health

Background

A moderated e-discussion which was held as part of the preparatory process for the 2009 Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) focussed on “*implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to global public health.*” Generating 126 responses from more than 5,500 subscribed participants, including health experts, practitioners and policy-makers from within and outside of the United Nations system, this online forum served as a platform to share relevant knowledge and concrete experiences, and in doing so, generated practical inputs towards the 2009 AMR. Jointly organized by UN/DESA and UNDP, with support of the WHO, it provided an opportunity, in particular for those working at the country level, to submit valuable contributions and actionable recommendations which may also be considered for inclusion in the report of the Secretary-General on the AMR.

Thematic focus

The e-discussion revolved around two broad themes: (1) **strengthening health care** which addressed the question of “How can we strengthen health systems, achieve universal coverage and revitalize primary health care (PHC), including by overcoming the shortage of health care workers?” and (2) **emerging and future health challenges** which examined the questions of “What are essential elements of national strategies to address the growing magnitude of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) (cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes) and their modifiable risk factors (tobacco use, unhealthy diets, physical inactivity and harmful use of alcohol), approaches to enhance trends for global health in the wake of the financial crisis, and innovations for global health partnerships to improve their performance?”

Key messages

- **Promoting global public health is essential to the overall development agenda:** Contributors discussed availability, accessibility and affordability of primary health care and called for government

action to strengthen institutional capacity, solid infrastructure and human resource development whereby donors should support the implementation of national development and action plans to reach health-related MDGs.

- **In times of crisis, targeted investments in health are a top priority:** Knowing and prioritizing the needs of target groups and harmonizing national budgets and external aid are key preconditions to make health care provision more effective. The numerous innovative proposals to mobilize resources included: collaboration with the informal economic sector and health workers living abroad and employing retired nurses.
- **There are no templates for solutions. They often require multi-sectoral and integrated approaches:** While raising awareness about the cross-cutting nature of primary health care and health-related action across all sectors was addressed as indispensable at the country-level, there was also a call for more inter-governmental collaboration, in particular among Member States with similar health challenges and epidemiological patterns.
- **To limit the damage of the migration of health care workers, a holistic perspective and the provision of incentives is required:** Participants recommended to better involve communities and civil society in health-care provision and to invest in health care workers holistically, including in their work place safety, basic needs of their families, logistical support and medical referral systems, among others.
- **To manage and control NCDs, a cohesive cross-sectoral collaboration with stronger and more targeted programmes is urgently needed:** Among many other recommendations, contributors highlighted the necessity to better relate NCDs and mental health to the MDGs, share information in virtual platforms and develop national response plans to promote healthy lifestyles and early detection of illness.