

# 2010 SUBSTANTIVE SESSION

## COORDINATION SEGMENT

### Summary Panel II

#### **“Coordinating efforts for achieving health related MDGs”**

*Tuesday, 6 July 2010, 3:30 – 5:30 p.m.*

As part of its 2010 coordination segment, the Economic and Social Council held a panel discussion to examine how efforts to achieve the health-related Millennium Development Goals can be better coordinated. The panel was chaired by H.E. Mr. Morten Wetland, Vice-President of ECOSOC and moderated by Mr. Tore Godal, Special Adviser to the Prime Minister of Norway on health. It included as speakers Dr. Julian Lob-Levyt, CEO of GAVI Alliance; Dr. Michel Kazatchkine, Executive Director of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; Mr. Keith Hansen, Director for Human Development, Latin America and the Caribbean Region, the World Bank; Dr. Philippe Douste-Blazy, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Innovative Financing for Development; Dr. Carissa Etienne, Assistant-Director General, Health Systems, WHO; and H.E. Mr. Leonard J. Edwards, Personal Representative of the Prime Minister of Canada for the G-8 and G-20 Summits

The **key messages** that emerged from the discussions were the following:

- The increased availability of resources is not sufficient for meeting the health-related MDGs. Efforts undertaken by various stakeholders, including the UN system and health alliances, need to be better coordinated and aligned if the goals are to be achieved by the target year of 2015.
- The newly-established Health Systems Platform is a significant step in this direction, as it enables the participating agencies (GAVI, Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis, World Bank and WHO) to streamline efforts to strengthen national health systems based on national priorities and leadership.
- The health-related MDGs have also benefited from the development of innovative financing mechanisms. However, innovative financing needs to be scaled up both in terms of the nature of finances that are mobilized, as well as how such finances are spent, and how they are governed.

**Dr. Julian Lob-Levyt** noted certain current challenges, such as pneumonia, which, along with diarrhoea, is the number one cause of death among children less than five years of age. He highlighted the need to coordinate efforts for the achievement of the health-related Millennium Development Goals, noting that the days of the “separately

funded initiative” are over. He presented the newly established health systems platform as an effort to ensure greater streamlining and mobilization between stakeholders including the WHO, World Bank and the health alliances. Among the strengths of the platform is that it is “country-driven” and “results focused,” and developed with a single budget and plan in mind.

**Dr. Michel Kazatchkine** remarked the notable progress made in the area of health in the last decade. He noted the importance of supporting programmes that have evolved from national needs and priorities and the need to simplify procedures, which is a key starting point of the health platform.

**Mr. Keith Hansen** also underlined the importance of national plans and strategies for the achievement of the health-related MDGs. He flagged the complexity of the “health puzzle”, noting that non-health related systems can have a significant impact on health efforts. Lack of roads or communication, for instance, can limit the effectiveness of health resources.

**Dr. Philippe Douste-Blazy** (spoke about the development of new innovative mechanisms for finance involving micro transactions. Capitalism should be modified to provide global public good, including through a proposed tax on inter-bank transactions of exchange which would have no consequences on the real economy. A microtax of 0.001% on interbank exchanges would have the potential of raising USD 40 billion per year. The internet, too, can open up possibilities for global donations that can add up significantly. In addition to financing efforts, patent reform is needed in regards to pharmaceuticals, in order to produce cheaper drugs to address global needs.

**Dr. Carissa Etienne** noted the WHO’s commitment to working with all partners to improve efficiency and align funding with country determined policies. The work of the WHO is anchored in the ‘one plan, one budget, one monitoring’ framework. Dr. Etienne stressed that the key for effectiveness is country ownership and leadership. Future concerns would include how the common funding platform can include more partners. The challenge is to “find and to grow new ways to fund health” as well as to make spending more efficient. Attainment of the health-MDGs “demands a coordinated approach from all stake holders with the country in full control.”

**Mr. Leonard J. Edwards** noted the commitments made at the recent G-8 summit for new and additional funding for health-related initiatives, including the Muskoka initiative on women and children. He also flagged the close link between MDGs 4 and 5 with Goals 1, 6, and 7. Mr. Edwards spoke of the need to ensure transparency and accountability in the use of funds for initiatives related to health, for example through aid tracking mechanisms.

#### Interactive dialogue

Belgium, speaking on behalf of the **European Union**, said that the EU was firmly committed to achieving MDGs, in particular MDG 5 which is lagging behind the most.

Population growth must be kept in mind. The EU supports innovative financing with a clear goal. The EU stressed mutual accountability for aid effectiveness, and asked the panel which mechanisms could be discussed in the September summit. The Republic of Korea expressed its concern for the little progress made in the area of maternal and child health despite increased funding. With the right direction and initiative, however, efficiency could be increased. RoK also encouraged innovative financing. The panel was asked how it envisions the funding platform will work with actors in the global health architecture.

**Mongolia** felt that the impact of climate change on global health and livelihood was not given enough consideration. The effects of climate on agriculture, as well as the consequences of natural disasters can have serious impacts on health. Mongolia stated that the country had almost achieved the MDG for maternal mortality in the last year, but that natural disasters had caused significant setbacks. Ecological and economic vulnerabilities should be taken into consideration. The panel was asked how the impact of climate change could be incorporated into health related initiatives.

**Brazil** mentioned that global health efforts must extend past assistance, and work to address issues such as trade barriers, which hamper access to medicine as well as other resources. “Shortcomings in other areas” often have direct impacts on health, so integration is essential. Urgent but innovative action must be taken while keeping in mind the national policies of developing countries.

The panellists responded to the comments, noting that accountability is crucial for both donors and recipients. Accountability will ensure that financial pledges of donors are met and that recipients are using the funds effectively. Dr. Michel Kazatchkine added that the scope of accountability goes beyond financial commitments. All stakeholders should be held accountable for their commitments. NGOs also have a role to play in as watchdogs to ensure transparency and legitimacy in the aid process. He further explained that accountability is important not only for the successful achievement of the MDGs by 2015, but also to ensure that there is a commitment to the health challenges beyond 2015.

Responding to the question raised by Mongolia, Dr. Etienne explained that climate change should be integrated into the national health plans of each country accordingly. Countries must discuss how to include within their own national plans the impacts of climate change; because circumstances vary from region to region, there cannot be a broad general plan, but more specifically tailored actions for individual countries are required.

On innovative financing, Dr. Douste-Blazy stated that the UN as a forum that brings together the knowledge and experience of experts from both private and public sectors and within the UN system, could provide an arena to debate where money from innovative financing should be directed, stressing the need to focus on development. He proposed the establishment of an expert task force to address these concerns.