

- **The World Bank supports health results through health system strengthening.** The vast majority of Bank support to health (about 75% last year) goes for health systems strengthening, which has helped make effective health services, insurance coverage, and public health programs available to hundreds of millions of people around the globe. The Bank provides this support to country health systems in conjunction with other development partners.
- **The Health Systems Funding Platform is the next logical step in the development of the architecture of coordination.** The first step was conceptual—the identification of the MDGs, particularly those pertaining to health and nutrition. The second step was the agreement on principles enshrined in the Paris Declaration and elaborated in the Accra Agenda. The third step was the formation of the International Health Partnership-plus, which provided the institutional framework to put the Paris and Accra principles into practice in health. The Platform has now created a financing framework as the next logical step to harmonize the support of development partners to country health systems.
- **National Strategies:** Strong national health strategies serve as a roadmap for country progress in strengthening national health systems and delivering improved health results. Yet health systems and improved results are also linked to other sectors – education, transportation, social protection, water and sanitation, and others. Even if clinics are well-stocked and well-staffed, for instance, they are of little use to people who lack adequate information or transportation to take advantage of them. As such, it is critical that national health strategies are linked to broader country development strategies.
- **Country Ownership:** Country ownership of the national health strategy is key to ensuring its effective implementation. Buy-in by major stakeholders, particularly citizens, is vital for achieving results. One of the key tenets of the Health Systems Funding Platform is that countries should be the leaders of their own health strategies and plans. The Platform supports country ownership and aims to support existing national plans by proposing to make funds available based on the joint assessment of the IHP+.
- **Joint Assessment:** Joint assessment is a shared assessment by key stakeholders (government, development partners, civil society) of the strengths and weaknesses of the national strategy. The outcome of the joint assessment is not a ‘pass’ or ‘fail’ rating, but rather a way to identify areas that are strong and areas that need improvement. One benefit of the joint assessment is that it strengthens support of all key stakeholders for the national health strategy.
- **Funding National Strategies:** The Health Systems Funding Platform will enable partners to fund health system elements of national health strategies directly, without requiring countries to prepare separate proposals for each partner. One mechanism for accessing funds is the joint assessment process, as the findings of a joint assessment could help stakeholders to decide how much financial support to provide in view of the contributions of others.

- **One Fiduciary Framework:** In addition to serving as a financing mechanism for the national strategy, the Platform also outlines the need for a single fiduciary framework in order to strengthen transparency of financial reporting and to ensure efficiency in use of funds – eliminating duplication of efforts where it exists, and filling existing gaps as needed (and in line with the national strategy).
- **In Practice:** Nepal is a good example of one way to support a national strategy. A joint assessment was requested by the Government of Nepal and took place in early 2010. Based on the joint assessment, Nepal has strengthened its strategy and has opted to expand the existing Joint Financing Agreement beyond just the pooled partners (Bank, UK, Australia) to include non-pooled partners. The JFA will be signed by the end of July 2010 and will enhance the transparency of funding flows and the accountability of partners, while harmonizing M&E and reporting, and reducing duplication and fragmentation. This example shows that we can make progress in achieving stronger health system strengthening plans, reducing transaction costs, and coordinating investments.