

29 January 2009

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Welcome to this third annual e-discussion in support of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) [Annual Ministerial Review \(AMR\)](#). The 2009 AMR is focusing on ‘**Global Public Health**’, and this year’s online forum will examine two key aspects of the theme: (I) strengthening health systems and (II) emerging and future health challenges. As noted in yesterday’s [message](#) from Mr. Kemal Derviş, UNDP Administrator, and Mr. Sha Zukang, Under Secretary-General of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the views and recommendations that emerge from the discussion will be an important contribution to the AMR preparations.

Beginning today and running through 11 February, the first part of this e-discussion will broadly look at the challenges countries face in strengthening their health systems in order to achieve their health goals. It raises two strategic sets of questions that can help guide policies at the national and international levels:

- 1. How can we overcome health inequities, achieve universal coverage and renew primary health care (PHC)? What are examples of successes toward universal coverage that could be replicated or scaled up? How can countries learn from each others’ experience in this?*
- 2. What steps can both developed and developing country governments take to overcome the shortage of health care workers? What can be done to limit the damage and create opportunities through increased migration of health professionals? What specific initiatives can the Economic and Social Council launch in July 2009?*

In the interest of distilling lessons that we can share with Member States to help them strengthen their efforts to achieve universal coverage of essential health services, we seek your experiences and views on these very specific questions.

The goal is to go beyond generic recommendations to focus on lessons learned and best practices that provide insight into what has worked and what has not. The [background note](#) provides some context on the core elements of this discussion.

Given the diversity of challenges and opportunities countries face, we are expecting a wide range of responses, experiences and recommendations.

As moderators, we look forward to reading your views, responding to your questions and guiding the first half of what we are sure will be a productive and stimulating discussion.

Warm regards,

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