

Summary Speech on
ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review Regional Ministerial Meeting for Asia and
the Pacific on “Promoting Health Literacy”, 30 April, 2009

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Distinguished Ms. Sylvie Lucas, President of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, Distinguished Mr. SHA Zukang, Under-Secretary-General, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Distinguished Dr. Ala Alwan, Assistant Director-General, World Health Organization, Ladies and gentlemen,

In order to strengthen the health promoted public policies and the capacity coping with health problems, we come together in Beijing in the warm spring to conduct a successful discussion on health literacy promotion and gain a substantial achievement. On behalf of the superintending department of health literacy of the sponsor, I appreciate sincerely your kind participation and your wonderful contribution to the meeting.

UN system has made a great effort for the persistent development of global public health, and this conference ,as the first regional meeting on promoting health literacy, is a new successful model to present the contribution of UN on health improvement. The contents of the meeting and innovative concepts bring forward during this meeting will not only promote the advance of health literacy of the public, but also has an important significance to the development of global health and to the achievement of MDGs. It has build a platform for health literacy promotion, and will arouse all the international agencies and all the governments in Asia and Pacific Region to redress policies and develop the national and regional action plan on health literacy promotion.

At the moment of closing the conference, we could find that so many tasks and considerations are left for us. I would like to share my thinking resulted in the meeting with all the participants:

First is about science. The key point of health literacy is scientific orientation. To guide the public to build up a scientific view on health, to learn and to practise basic health knowledge and skills is the essential task of promoting health literacy. Health is the foundation of social and individual development, and it is one of the important goals of all the people and societies to seek for. Any information or measure against science will mislead the people's understanding of health knowledge and their behavior even damage health. Therefore, more attention should be paid for building up a scientific view on health, and take roots of scientific information and skills on health into the public opinion and their life.

Second is about participation. Health literacy is closely related to both the public and individual health. It is necessary to promote health literacy with the resultant force for leadership advocacy, multi-sectors mobilization and coordination, and wide participation of all the communities, families and individuals. Although some efforts have been done in China, such as the initiatives merged with the "Health Promotion for Hundreds of Millions Farmers", community health services and other projects, there will be a long way to go for us to promoting the citizens' health literacy in China.

Third is about cooperation. As we know that a opening society is an important characteristic of the world. To promote health literacy of both the public and individuals needs not only the efforts of each country or region, but also experience and best practices sharing with each other, especially the undeveloped countries and regions, they need more attentions and supports from the international society. As an excellent beginning, this conference will enhance the dialogue, communication and cooperation on health literacy promotion in nations and regions. We do believe that all of us hope

that we can make a big difference on developing health promoting strategies and promoting health literacy based on concerted efforts and cooperation among all the nations, regions, as well as the international organizations.

Thanks again for your participation, and best wishes to all of you for your nice trip back and good health. Welcome to China again!

Thank you!