

**Ministerial Communiqué**  
**Foreign Policy and Global Health Initiative**  
**Geneva, 21 May 2013**

The Ministers of Health of the Foreign Policy and Global Health (FPGH) Initiative, comprising Brazil, France, Indonesia, Norway, Senegal, South Africa, and Thailand or their representatives, met today on the sidelines of the 66<sup>th</sup> Session of the World Health Assembly in Geneva.

They reaffirmed their commitment to the role of the Initiative in promoting synergy between foreign policy and global health, as well as the contribution of the Oslo Ministerial Declaration entitled “Global Health: a pressing foreign policy issue of our time” in placing health as a foreign policy issue on the international agenda. They recognized that global health challenges require concerted and sustained efforts in order to further promote a global policy environment supportive of global health.

They also recognized the leading role of the World Health Organization as the primary specialized agency for health, including its roles and functions with regard to health policy in accordance with its mandate.

The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to make every effort to accelerate the achievement of the health-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). They noted that more efforts need to be undertaken to sustain the gain made, accelerate progress and address the remaining gaps. In this regard, they emphasized the importance of implementing the recommended actions by the UN Commission on Life-Saving Commodities for Women and Children. They also recognized that efforts to achieve progress towards the realization of health-related MDGs shall continue beyond 2015.

They noted that challenges in global health, including major inequities and vulnerabilities among and within countries and regions, still remain and demand persistent attention. In this regard, they underlined the importance of a renewed Global Partnership for development that enables a transformative, people-centered and planet-sensitive development agenda which is realized through the equal partnership of all stakeholders.

The Ministers acknowledged that health is both a driver and a beneficiary of economic growth and development. They also noted that health has a strong relationship with the core values that should be at the heart of advancing the UN Development Agenda beyond 2015, with particular focus on: human rights, inclusion, participation, poverty eradication, equality and sustainability as well as realizing unmet International Development Goals and Commitments. They noted with satisfaction the growing interest of Governments in promoting enhanced coordination between the Ministries of Health and Finance.

They stressed that good health is both precondition and outcome of all three dimensions of sustainable development, namely environmental, economic and social, and therefore further global health advancement should not only rely on a health-related development goal, but also health indicators which could serve to measure progress towards sustainable development in other sectors.

The Ministers fully support universal health coverage as a fundamental tool to promote

equity and right-based approach to sustainable development, as stated in the 2012 UN General Assembly Resolution on UHC (A/67/81) initiated by FPGH countries. They recognized the importance of universal access while ensuring that the use of these services does not expose the users to financial hardship.

The Ministers further emphasized the need to strengthen national health systems, especially through primary health-care, health promotion and social protection mechanisms. The ministers expressed their concerns on the possible cost escalation due to the excessive use of expensive new drugs and health technologies, ageing population and NCDs. They therefore strongly support the ECOSOC discussion to take place on the Contribution of Science and Technology to the implementation of UHC, especially the use of and the capacity building on Health Technology Assessment and Strategic Purchasing to ensure best value for money and cost saving while implementing UHC.

The Ministers underscored the necessity to address the emerging threats posed by the growing burden of non-communicable diseases, and expressed their strong support to the 9 voluntary global targets and 25 indicators which will drive action in this area. Production, trade and marketing of addictive substances and unhealthy food, together with urban lifestyles that hamper physical activity as well as environmental hazards contributes significantly to the growing burden of non-communicable diseases. At the same time, they encouraged strengthening the fight against communicable diseases, including neglected tropical diseases.

The Ministers stressed the importance of the implementation of the Framework on Pandemic Influenza Preparedness for Sharing of Influenza Viruses and Access to Vaccines and Other Benefits and noted that its implementation should be in line with the International Health Regulations. They welcomed the signing of the SMTA 2 between the WHO and one of the largest vaccine manufacturers as a positive step toward the full implementation of the Framework and reiterated their expectation that the Framework will contribute to a more coordinated, comprehensive and equitable response to future pandemics.

The Ministers are also concerned about the increasing threats from Antimicrobial Resistance to existing drugs, and that there are fewer and fewer effective drugs to tackle infectious diseases, including Malaria and Tuberculosis. They fully support global efforts against Antimicrobial Resistance and are ready to collaborate with WHO and other international partners to actively tackle this threat.

The Ministers recognized the necessity to address the issue of Substandard/ spurious/ falsely-labelled/ falsified/ counterfeit medical products (SSFFC). In this regard, they welcomed the work of the Member State Mechanism on SSFFC. They encouraged all member States to make this tool operational and effective in order to protect public health and promote access to quality medical products. They reaffirm their commitment in favour of increased access to affordable, safe, effective and quality medicines and diagnostics and other technologies, including through the full use of trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights (TRIPS).

The Ministers welcomed the report of the Consultative Expert Working Group on Research and Development: Financing and Coordination "Research and development to meet health needs in developing countries: strengthening global financing and coordination". They also welcomed the proposal to establish a global health Research and Development Observatory within the WHO Secretariat in order to monitor the progress of investment in health R&D, especially for the neglected tropical diseases.

With regard to the reform process of the WHO, the Ministers recognized the magnitude of the task and the useful steps already taken. They stressed the necessity of continued measures in strengthening the Organization at its three levels (global, regional and local) in order to provide evidence-based guidance for decision-making and to fulfill its constitutional mandate in the interest of all Member States. The Ministers also underscored that the reform process and its implementation should be Member-State driven, based on clear and agreed priorities, fully transparent and inclusive. They stressed the importance of the newly established Financing Dialogue as a way to ensure funds are aligned with the priorities set by the governing bodies, as well as to improve the predictability of funding for the WHO in order to fulfill its mandate.

They reaffirmed their commitment to continue advancing global health issues in a broader United Nations framework and beyond, in particular by maintaining and utilizing the agenda item “Global Health and Foreign Policy” on the agenda of the United Nations General Assembly.