

Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals

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Constituency : France, Germany, Switzerland

Common Statement on Health and Population Dynamics

Honorable Co-Chairs,

Your Excellencies,

Dear colleagues,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of Germany, Switzerland and France.

Three out of eight Millennium Development Goals are directly related to health. The fight against maternal and child mortality and against the 3 pandemics must go on and accelerate beyond 2015. Germany, Switzerland and France have contributed more than 5 billion USD to the *Global Fund to fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria* from 2001 to 2012. Our 3 countries have committed 1 billion USD in additional aid for maternal and child health from 2010 to 2015, with special emphasis on sexual and reproductive health. Despite these significant investments, the health-related MDGs are off-track for 2015. We must draw lessons from this, improving ownership, mutual accountability and mobilization of domestic resources.

Three factors underpin a more sustainable approach for health development after 2015 :

- First, we must guarantee the enjoyment of right to health at all stages of life, to all people without discrimination and focus our action on the most vulnerable persons;
- Second, we must strengthen health systems and broaden the delivery of basic health services, while ensuring quality, financial protection and inclusive population coverage;

- Third, we must take into account the social, economic, and environmental determinants of health with a view to maximizing healthy life expectancy.

We will need to agree on a clear and measurable sustainable development goal for health beyond 2015. We believe Universal Health Coverage is well positioned to become this overarching goal, since it addresses most health concerns in a sustainable and equitable way. Universal Health Coverage aims at ensuring that all people have access, without discrimination and without the fear of impoverishment, to quality essential medicines and health services. Universal Health Coverage is a universal, dynamic, and operational goal which constitutes a concrete realization of the right to health. It can be measured through indicators of the WHO and the World Bank such as out-of-pocket payments for health; skilled-birth attendance; or availability of quality essential medicines. These indicators should be disaggregated by sex, age, income, with the view to reduce discriminations in terms of coverage.

Nobody can object to the positive impact on health of the progress made in other areas, such as food security, education, gender equality, or access to improved drinking-water and sanitation. Indeed, many health challenges are related to unsustainable consumption and production patterns. Further global health advancement will need a true integration all 3 dimensions of sustainable development, considering the impact on health of all policies.

Climate change induces higher risks of natural disasters and disseminates infectious vectors. Water, air, land pollutions as well as the unsound management of chemical and waste are also major threats to global health. Production, trade, and marketing of addictive substances and food which is too sweet, salty fatty, together with very demanding lifestyles and physical inactivity, are closely linked to the growing burden of non communicable diseases. It is therefore imperative to address the social, economic and environmental

determinants of health, with one “impact indicator” for sustainable development being the healthy life expectancy.

As for demography, the world population is expected to reach the threshold of nine billion by 2050. While most countries in the world have started their demographic transition, some are only at the beginning of the process. These demographic trends will drive significant changes in the age structure of populations with, in one hand, a higher proportion of young, mobile and urban people, and in the other hand, a fast-aging population.

We are convinced of the relevance of a gender-based human-rights approach, ensuring sexual and reproductive health and rights, and investments in human capital, throughout the life course. This calls for a concerted effort to ensure universal access to education, to sexual and reproductive health, and to decent work opportunities, especially for the 1.8 billion young people. Ensuring sexual and reproductive health and rights is a prerequisite for sustainable development and poverty reduction. It requires increasing the availability of integrated, quality and affordable healthcare and services, as well as undertaking policy and legal reforms to protect fundamental human rights and ensure non-discrimination and equality under the law.

The future development partnership should not only work on the challenges, but also towards the opportunities of population dynamics. Migration can be an enabler of sustainable development by enhancing people’s income, health, and education. Migrant remittances amount to more than three times official development assistance (ODA). Lowering the cost of international remittance transfers by 5 percentage points could contribute to poverty reduction in the order of 16 billion USD per year.

If well managed, the transformation process towards urbanized societies can be a driver of sustainable development. Democratic governance and integrated planning processes under the responsibility of local authorities are needed to allow prosperity whilst reducing the ecological footprint.

I thank you for your attention.