

Contributing to social and economic development: sustainable action across sectors to improve health and health equity (follow up of the 8th Global Conference on Health Promotion)

Report by the Secretariat

1. This report provides information on the outcome of the 8th Global Conference on Health Promotion (Helsinki, 10–14 June 2013). The Government of Finland and WHO jointly organized the Global Conference, which was hosted by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health of Finland in Helsinki. The Conference had the following aims:

- to facilitate exchange of experiences and lessons learnt and give guidance on effective mechanisms for promoting intersectoral action;
- to review approaches for overcoming barriers and building capacity for implementing Health in All Policies;
- to identify opportunities to implement the recommendations of the Commission on Social Determinants of Health through Health in All Policies;
- to establish and review the economic, developmental and social cases for investing in Health in All Policies;
- to consider the contribution of health promotion in the renewal and reform of primary health care;
- to review the progress, impact and achievements of health promotion since the First International Conference on Health Promotion (Ottawa, 21 November 1986).

2. The 8th Global Conference on Health Promotion was the latest in the series of global expert conferences on health promotion,¹ originally inspired by the Alma Ata Declaration on Primary Health Care (1978) and the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion (1986). These identified intersectoral action and healthy public policy as central elements for the promotion of health, the achievement of health equity and the realization of health as a human right. In total, 659 government officials and experts

¹ The series includes the conferences held in Ottawa (1986), Adelaide (1988), Sundsvall (1991), Jakarta (1997), Mexico City (2000), Bangkok (2005), Nairobi (2009) and Helsinki (2013).

from 122 Member States attended the Global Conference, including representatives from 26 least developed countries, about 20 nongovernmental organizations and 10 United Nations and intergovernmental organizations.

3. The Conference was the first one in the series of eight to which all WHO Member States were invited. A Circular Letter was despatched requesting Member States to nominate up to two representatives to participate in the Conference (one from the health sector and one from a sector other than health). In accordance with resolution WHA50.1, funding was provided to cover the cost of one delegate per least developed country.

OUTCOMES

4. The key outcomes of the Conference include the Helsinki Statement on Health in All Policies, which was endorsed by the participants attending.¹ In addition, a paper entitled “Health In All Policies Framework for Country Action” was also developed through the Conference process.²

5. In the lead up to the Conference, a large number of country examples and practical guides were produced by WHO. These include case studies compiled by the WHO regional offices for Africa, the Americas, South-East Asia and the Eastern Mediterranean, as well as guides published by the Regional Office for Europe, and a regional framework for country action is being finalized by the Regional Office for South-East Asia. A training package has also been developed, and training was conducted in the Regional Office for the Western Pacific. In addition, examples of good practices and practical guides were compiled, some 20 personal reflections videotaped and all plenary sessions webcast.³

IMMEDIATE FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

6. The following actions are planned: key outcomes of the Conference, including a selection of country presentations, will be published in an academic journal in the second quarter of 2014; WHO will work with its partners to review and implement, as appropriate, the Framework for Country Action; and progress on promoting Health in All Policies will be reviewed at the 9th Global Conference, which is due to be held towards the end of 2016.

ACTION BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

7. The Board is invited to note this report.

= = =

¹ Available at http://www.who.int/healthpromotion/conferences/8gchp/statement_2013/en/index.html (accessed 15 January 2014).

² Available at <http://www.who.int/healthpromotion/frameworkforcountryaction/en> (accessed 17 January 2014).

³ The videos concerned are available on the websites <http://www.healthpromotion2013.org/> and www.who.int/healthpromotion (accessed 15 January 2014).