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## **Report on hosted partnerships**

### **Report by the Director General**

1. In accordance with decision EB132(10) (2013), the Executive Board is regularly updated on major developments and issues arising in connection with WHO-hosted partnerships.<sup>1</sup> This report provides updates on the main findings and recommendations of the periodic review of hosted partnerships and major developments in partnerships hosted by WHO.

2. In decision EB132(10), the Board requested its Programme, Budget and Administration Committee: to ensure that the arrangements for hosted health partnerships are regularly reviewed on a case-by-case and timely basis in respect of their contributions to improved health outcomes, WHO's interaction with individual hosted partnerships, and the harmonization of their work with the work of WHO; and to make recommendations for the consideration of the Board, as appropriate, through a standing item on the subject on the Board's agenda. In 2018, Unitaid was reviewed.<sup>2</sup> This year the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies is proposed for review.<sup>3</sup>

3. The Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 (GPW13), approved by the Health Assembly in 2018,<sup>4</sup> highlights the importance of partnership, noting that WHO can only accomplish its ambitious goals with the support of partners. As implementation of the General Programme of Work continues, the work of the hosted partnerships should contribute to its outcomes and impacts and will be reflected in future reports to the Executive Board. In addition to the hosted partnerships, the Secretariat is also maintaining a list of health partnerships and collaborative arrangements with WHO involvement.<sup>5</sup>

### **MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS IN WHO-HOSTED PARTNERSHIPS**

#### **Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research**

4. The Alliance continued to prioritize work with policy-makers to stimulate the demand for, and use of, health policy and systems research in 2018. In collaboration with the Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR) and the Pan American Health Organization (WHO/PAHO), the Alliance is supporting research projects led by policy-makers to assist delivery of the health-related Sustainable Development Goals in the Region of the Americas. The Alliance also

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<sup>1</sup> See document EB132/2013/REC/1.

<sup>2</sup> See document EB143/8.

<sup>3</sup> See document EB145/8.

<sup>4</sup> See resolution WHA71.1.

<sup>5</sup> See <https://www.who.int/about/collaborations/partnerships/en/> (accessed 12 March 2019).

commenced an initiative with Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) to build capacity for implementer-led implementation research aimed at strengthening immunization systems in Ethiopia. The second edition of a policy leadership group championing the use of health systems research evidence was also supported by the Alliance.

5. In 2018, the Alliance prioritized stronger country ownership and leadership in the generation and use of evidence, in keeping with the objectives of the Thirteenth General Programme of Work, 2019–2023 . In this context, the Alliance is coordinating the WHO-wide Country-led Implementation Research Initiative for Universal Health Coverage. This is already providing support for three Member States – Ethiopia, India and Nepal – to identify research priorities, build capacity, and conduct research. The Alliance is also working with ministries of health in India, Georgia, Malaysia and Zimbabwe through the establishment of rapid review support platforms.

6. The Alliance cosponsored the 5th Global Symposium on Health Systems Research (Liverpool, 8–12 October 2018), on the theme of “Health Systems for All in the SDG Era”, in collaboration with the WHO Regional Office for Europe, a consortium of academic institutions and other partners. The Symposium was attended by over 2200 delegates from 125 countries; 95% of delegates surveyed indicated that it met or exceeded expectations, successfully providing a platform for professionals in health systems research to learn, exchange views and reinforce networks.

7. Continuing its contributions to strengthening the field of health policy and systems research, the Alliance launched two new guidance documents in 2018: “A health policy analysis reader: The politics of policy change in low- and middle-income countries”<sup>1</sup> and “Evidence synthesis for health policy and systems: a methods guide”.<sup>2</sup>

### **European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies**

8. The European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies celebrated its twentieth anniversary in 2018 and renewed its partnership agreement for 2019–2023. With Spain joining the Observatory, there are now 10 Member States participating,<sup>3</sup> together with other partners.

9. The Observatory has continued to harmonize its work with that of WHO, both in terms of its alignment with the Thirteenth General Programme of Work and its close consultation and collaboration, particularly with the WHO Regional Office for Europe. It fosters the extension of universal health coverage by contributing evidence that supports improved access to quality essential health services; high quality, people-centred health care; a strengthened health workforce; and effective health governance, among other matters.

10. The Observatory’s technical work revolves around country monitoring, analysis, health systems performance assessment and knowledge brokering. It aims to provide Member States with evidence to support their efforts to improve health outcomes.

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<sup>1</sup> Available at: <https://www.who.int/alliance-hpsr/resources/publications/hpa-reader/en/> (accessed 12 March 2019).

<sup>2</sup> Available at: <https://www.who.int/alliance-hpsr/resources/publications/hsr-synthesis/en/> (accessed 12 March 2019).

<sup>3</sup> Austria, Belgium, Finland, Ireland, Norway, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

11. The Observatory underwent an external evaluation in 2017–2018 in preparation for the renewal of the partnership, which found that it delivered on its objectives and was widely valued. As noted in paragraph 2 above, in accordance with decision EB132(10) the Observatory is the subject of a review presented in a separate report to the Executive Board.<sup>1</sup>

### **Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health**

12. 2018 was an important year for the community focused on improving and safeguarding the health and well-being of women, children and adolescents, within the context of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health (2016–2023).<sup>2</sup> In the collective efforts, the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH), focused its attention on empowering stakeholders; bringing them together towards greater alignment on policies, resources and actions; and strengthening global accountability processes to monitor collective progress.

13. The Partnership's work in 2018 culminated in the PMNCH Partners' Forum (New Delhi, 12 and 13 December 2018), which was jointly organized and delivered by the Partnership and the Government of India, under the patronage of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Forum brought together heads of state, ministers and more than 1600 partners working towards the achievement of the Global Strategy aims and objectives. At the forum, the Government of India pledged to invest an additional US\$ 100 billion in its health sector by 2025, leading the way for many other governments and entities to make their respective pledges. The Forum saw the launch of an analysis of factors that contribute to reducing maternal and child mortality. The analysis suggested that action from sectors other than health have a profound influence on progress.

14. The Partnership has continued to coordinate the Unified Accountability Framework, working with stakeholders on streamlining accountability reporting; monitoring progress against Global Strategy objectives; and setting in motion multistakeholder collaboration to improve financial accountability globally, regionally and nationally. The Partnership has supported national stakeholders, including youth-led organizations, through small grants and capacity-building programmes of work to strengthen their abilities in accountability as well as in advocating for change.

15. To support these and other efforts, the Partnership has reshaped its 2018–2020 Business Plan<sup>3</sup> to focus on six critical areas of work that require further action, as indicated by the High-Level Steering Group, Chaired by United Nations Secretary-General, Mr António Guterres. These are Adolescent Health and Well-being; Early Childhood Development; Empowerment of Women, Girls and Communities; Humanitarian and Fragile Settings; Quality, Equity and Dignity; and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. Progress has been made across these areas, with a particular focus in 2018 on Early Childhood Development, as noted in the report to the 142nd session of the Executive Board.<sup>4</sup> The Partnership, together with WHO and other partners, supported the development and launch in May 2018 of the Nurturing Care Framework for Early Childhood Development.

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<sup>1</sup> Document EB145/8.

<sup>2</sup> Available at: <https://www.who.int/life-course/publications/global-strategy-2016-2030/en/> (accessed 12 March 2019).

<sup>3</sup> Available at: [https://www.who.int/pmnch/PMNCH\\_Business\\_Plan\\_2018-2020.pdf](https://www.who.int/pmnch/PMNCH_Business_Plan_2018-2020.pdf) (accessed 12 March 2019).

<sup>4</sup> See document EB142/19.

## Unitaid

16. One of Unitaid's 2018 priorities was to enhance collaboration with its grant implementers and partners. The Grant Implementers Forum (Geneva, 28 February–1 March 2018) brought together more than 100 Chief Operating Officers, Chief Financial Officers and Programme Directors representing 28 entities. It provided an opportunity to align approaches for working together more effectively and for strengthening engagement with beneficiary countries and partners further.

17. Unitaid has been asked to contribute to several global health initiatives connected with innovation, access and scalability; notably, to chair the Subgroup on Innovation, R&D and Access of the United Nations Interagency Coordination Group on Antimicrobial Resistance (IACG) and to be a signatory to the Global Action Plan for healthy lives and well-being for all, designed to accelerate progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal 3.<sup>1</sup> This plan underscores the commitment of 12 organizations to align efforts to accelerate progress in global health. Unitaid is part of the group working on the R&D, Innovation and Access Accelerator under the Global Action Plan.

18. During 2018 Unitaid enhanced its portfolio with over US\$ 250 million of new or extended grants approved by the Unitaid Executive Board. This included broadening the portfolio of projects in the areas of HIV self-testing, malaria vector control, intellectual property, and multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB). A jointly funded US\$ 66 million investment by Unitaid and the Global Fund is to pilot long-lasting nets treated with new insecticide combinations in sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, a new three-year tranche of US\$ 22 million funding was approved to support the WHO prequalification programme over the period 2019–2021. Beyond the investment to the WHO prequalification programme, Unitaid is working closely with other WHO departments, for example providing evidence generated from Unitaid projects to support activities such as guideline development. This includes continuing to adopt a structured approach to its longstanding collaboration with WHO departments through “enabler grants”, under which Unitaid provides grant funds to WHO to give technical support to Unitaid projects.

19. Looking ahead, Unitaid reaches the mid-point of its five-year Strategy (2017–2021) in 2019 and is undertaking a mid-term review, which will be completed by the summer. This review will assess (i) Unitaid's performance to date against its strategic objectives of innovation, access and scalability, (ii) a review of Unitaid's operating model, and (iii) key opportunities for Unitaid to maximize impact by 2021 and beyond. Eight projects in development seek to accelerate processes in the following areas: equitable access to cervical cancer screening and treatment (two projects); better tools for integrated management of childhood fever (two projects); and new diagnostics and medicines for MDR-TB (four projects). Later in 2019, Unitaid anticipates making investments in some new areas, including improved management of *Plasmodium vivax* malaria, and long-acting technologies.

## PERIODIC REVIEW OF WHO-HOSTED PARTNERSHIPS

20. The review of the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies was undertaken in accordance with the framework for periodic review of hosted partnerships,<sup>2</sup> with inputs from the secretariats both of the hosted partnership and the Secretariat providing relevant perspectives. The report of the review summarizes the contribution of the Observatory to improved health outcomes, the

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.who.int/sdg/global-action-plan> (accessed 12 March 2019).

<sup>2</sup> See document EBPBAC19/8 – Periodic review of WHO-hosted partnerships ([http://apps.who.int/gb/pbac/pdf\\_files/Nineteenth/PBAC19\\_8-en.pdf](http://apps.who.int/gb/pbac/pdf_files/Nineteenth/PBAC19_8-en.pdf) accessed 7 March 2019).

harmonization of its work with the relevant work of WHO, and the Secretariat's interaction with the Partnership.

21. The European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies Development Plan covers the period 2019–2023 which, as it coincides with that of Thirteenth General Programme of Work, will help to underpin future efforts. The Development Plan, reflecting the results of an external evaluation carried out in the period 2017–2018, focuses on taking forward the Observatory's contribution to Member States and the Secretariat.

**ACTION BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD**

22. The Board is invited to note the report.

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