Ten principles of health

The 22 senior health experts who met at Riga renewed their commitment to the principles of Health for all (HFA), and recommended that—in order to accelerate progress towards that goal—countries should:

1. Maintain HFA as a permanent goal of all nations up to and beyond the year 2000
Reaffirm Health for all as a permanent objective of all nations, as stressed in the Alma-Ata Declaration, and establish a process for examining the longer term challenges to Health for all that will extend into the 21st century.

2. Renew and strengthen HFA strategies
Each country should continue to monitor its own health problems and develop its own health strategies in the spirit of Health for all. This will reveal its most pressing health problems and identify the most seriously underserved and vulnerable populations. Programmes should be directed towards those populations in the spirit of equity, inviting their active participation in the development and implementation of the strategies.

3. Intensify social and political action for HFA
Intensify social and political actions necessary to support shifts in policy and allocation of resources required to progress toward Health for all, including the involvement of other sectors, non-governmental organizations, communities and other interested groups. Seek mechanisms for promoting new partnerships for health among them and with government.

4. Develop and mobilize leadership for HFA
Give strong emphasis in every country to developing and stimulating the interest and support of current and potential leaders in health and other sectors, at community district and national levels, in order to bring creativity, advocacy, commitment and resources to bear on the challenge of health development.

5. Enable the people to share in decision-making and action for health
Empower people by providing information, technical support, and decision-making possibilities, so as to enable them to share in the opportunities and responsibilities for action in the interest of their own health. Give special attention to the role of women in health and development.

6. Make intersectoral collaboration a force for HFA
Support the creation of sustained intersectoral collaboration for health by incorporating health objectives into sectoral policies and activating potential mechanisms at all levels.

7. Strengthen district health systems based on PHC
Strengthen district health systems based on primary health care, as a key action point for focusing national policies, resources and local concerns on the most pressing health needs and underserved people.

8. Plan, prepare and support health manpower for HFA
Change educational and training programmes for health personnel emphasising relevance to health services requirements by locating learning experiences in functioning health systems based on primary health care. Provide strong moral and resource support for personnel, particularly those working in remote or difficult circumstances.

9. Ensure development and rational use of science and appropriate technology
Emphasise the applications of science and appropriate technology to the critical health problems that threaten populations in all parts of the world, and strengthen research capacities of Third World countries, with emphasis on research aimed at improving the health of the most deprived people.

10. Overcome problems that continue to resist solution
Establish priority programmes aimed at overcoming serious problems where underdevelopment or disturbances of development are major contributing factors and progress has been very limited, such as: high infant, child and maternal mortality rates; substance abuse, such as tobacco and alcohol; and the imbalance between population growth and environmental and socio-economic resources. Develop improved approaches through primary health care emphasising intersectoral action.