

The post-2015 health development agenda and the Pacific

In my presentation this morning I will aim first to describe the post-2015 process at the UN, and some of its issues and challenges.

I will then talk about health policy and program priorities for the Australian aid program.

I'll then try to bring these two topics together to briefly describe the health elements of the post 2015 development goals discussion, and Australia's priorities in that discussion.

The Post-2015 process

- The United Nations (UN) is currently leading global negotiations to agree a new development agenda to replace the Millennium Development Goals – due to expire in 2015.
- This new agenda, while non-binding, will shape international development cooperation and finance flows to 2030 and beyond.
 - Australia is actively participating in UN-led negotiations to agree the new development agenda.
 - Australia was a member of the two key UN preparatory forums negotiating the new agenda and considering financing: the Sustainable Development Goals Open Working Group (OWG) and Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Financing for Sustainable Development (SFDC).
- The OWG finished its work in July, forwarding a final report to the UN General Assembly for its consideration.
- This report included a proposal for 17 goals and 169 targets.
- It is worth reflecting for a moment on how and why the post-2015 goals will be different from the MDGs.
- Since the MDGs were developed in 2000 the global development landscape has shifted significantly
 - including a proliferation of actors and sources of finance

- and the rise of new and emerging challenges, such as non-communicable diseases.
- Bringing together 193 countries to agree a compelling new agenda that reflects these changes is not an easy task.
- Negotiations are being further complicated by
 - the breadth of issues covered
 - the contested nature of many of the issues on the table
 - the overlap with other key international processes, particularly the third International Conference on Financing for Development and the UN Framework Convention on climate change negotiations in 2015.

Australia's priorities for health and development

- Australia's priorities for health and development are articulated in the new development policy announced by the Minister for Foreign Affairs in June this year
 - the purpose of the aid program is to promote Australia's national interests by contributing to sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction.
- Our priority is assisting countries in the region to develop quality, accessible health services, particularly for the poor and vulnerable, through sustainable health systems. Strong health systems are required to deliver effective interventions, medicines and vaccines to populations and communities.
- Our investments in health focus on supporting partner governments in the Indo-Pacific region to strengthen basic health systems to be able to:
 - prevent and treat communicable diseases such as HIV, tuberculosis (TB) and malaria
 - achieve better health outcomes through quality maternal and child health and family planning services

- improve nutrition as part of our commitments to improve maternal and child health and to prevent and manage non-communicable diseases
- improve hygiene and access to water supply and sanitation services.
- DFAT is in the process of working through the detail on this high level policy direction so that our country programs have guidance on how to make decisions around the best buys in health for individual country contexts.

Australia's health priorities for the post-2015 agenda

- We continue to advocate for these priorities to be reflected in the post-2015 agenda.
- Building on the lessons of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) the new agenda must be simple, concise and compelling to have the greatest impact.
- It must complete and build on the unfinished business of the MDGs by maintaining a strong focus on poverty, health, education, food security and water.
 - It must also address new challenges and those issues that were left out of the MDGs such as non-communicable diseases - reflecting the changed global environment (the leading causes of death worldwide) and in particular the needs of the Pacific where they frequently account for 70 per cent of all deaths.
- More broadly, and consistent with Australia's new aid policy, it is crucial that the new agenda has a stronger focus on
 - economic growth — including trade, the private sector and jobs
 - women's equality and economic empowerment
 - governance, peace and stability.

Post-2015 Negotiations

- Global consensus emerged early on one health goal - ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

- with targets on maternal and child mortality, HIV, AIDS and malaria, non-communicable diseases, substance abuse, road traffic accidents, access to sexual and reproductive health and universal health coverage.
- Australia strongly supports the addition of a new target on reducing the burden of non-communicable diseases as an emerging health concern.
- Work is also needed to ensure the goal remains focussed on the most pressing issues in global health including the need for countries to develop stronger health systems to ensure efficiency and progress towards self-sufficiency, and to strengthen the target on sexual and reproductive health and rights.

Pacific Island States in post-2015 negotiations

- Pacific Island States have also been active in negotiations, and are pushing for the new agenda to include economic growth, oceans and fisheries, climate change, non-communicable diseases and gender.
- The recent UNSIDS Conference set out SIDS priorities, including for the post-2015 development agenda
 - strong emphasis was placed on the need to address the burden of non-communicable diseases, given they are the leading cause of death worldwide.

Conclusion

- Australia will continue to advocate internationally for a single health goal with targets that address the unfinished MDG agenda in health, and new targets on reducing the burden of non-communicable diseases and universal health coverage through sustainable health systems.