

# The Aarhus Declaration on Global Health

26 MAY 2023

## Background

Drivers of disease emergence include demographic change, climate change, the globalization of travel and trade, rising socio-economic inequalities and societal and political unrest. High-density urban areas are increasingly becoming hotspots for the spread of infectious diseases and the rapid rise in non-communicable diseases, (NCDs).

We have some of the tools and knowledge to tackle this pressing issue, but the global community lacks the determination to prioritize and allocate sufficient resources for the required efforts, which prevents us from implementing an enhanced global health system with universal access to quality healthcare services.

The constant threat of pandemics and the global challenges presented by NCDs, global climate change, the impending crisis of antimicrobial resistance and persistent health inequities all emphasize the imperative of seeking transnational, global solutions. Equally important is the implementation of established and well-documented solutions.

Sustainable global health solutions require stable and significant transnational funding for research and development as well as the establishment of a framework for sharing crucial technologies, medical knowledge, and a better implementation of research. It is crucial to make these resources accessible to and affordable for underserved populations, without the barriers of patents and trade regulations that hampers the access to medicine and health care products in LMICs. One of the early successful global health programmes was the Expanded Program on Immunizations (EPI), which provides childhood vaccines to millions of children - later followed by The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, which provides treatment infrastructures and affordable medicines for HIV, and treatment for tuberculosis and malaria to millions. The Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) played a major role in funding COVID-19 vaccine trials. Similar transnational programmes are necessary to address pressing planetary health issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, food insecurity and the mental health crisis.

Therefore, to sustain and develop global health, the **MatchPoints 2023** conference participants call for and pledge to focus their efforts on: **Developing new paradigms in healthcare for disease prevention and treatment (1, 2), advancing research endeavours (3, 4), promoting education initiatives (5, 6), encouraging collaboration (7, 8) and increasing innovation (9, 10).**

**1.**

Sufficient health system response for current global health challenges, including future epidemics. It is vital to secure sustainable funding for international networks like the Global Fund and CEPI as well as for international surveillance systems using a ONE HEALTH approach. It is also essential that we implement policies and adapt health systems to address the rapid epidemiological transition towards non-communicable diseases. Equally important is embracing digital health innovations such as psychosocial interventions for mental illness. Government and the public sector must create an ambitious procurement system to rethink incentives for healthcare professionals for innovation and private sector involvement.

**2.**

Universal health coverage is a fundamental human right, and ensuring sustainable transnational funding for the poverty-oriented and community-based strengthening of primary health systems in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) is a key aspect in Global Health. It is necessary to improve healthcare delivery for underserved communities with a global commitment to increase domestic health funding by one per cent of gross domestic product (**GDP**) in order to secure equal access to healthcare and preventive measures, such as vaccines, including for vulnerable groups. Health disparities locally and globally must be addressed and we urge to ensure health for all using comprehensive diagonal approaches – combining disease-specific “vertical” service delivery (selective targeting of specific interventions) with integrated “horizontal” publicly funded health system models (comprehensive primary care).

**3.**

Sustainable, transnational financial support to build institutional global health research capacity in LMICs and foster open international research collaboration as well as sharing of data and knowledge through equitable bi- or multilateral partnerships. Initiatives like PhD twinning and building up knowledge in the local population based on local knowledge spreaders and community health volunteers. By prioritizing these efforts, we can enhance research capabilities, strengthen local expertise, and advance global health outcomes, including strengthening the capacity of the population to understand and manage health issues and navigate in the health system.

**4.**

Centers of excellence in LMICs must be supported including local and regional capacity building, training and career opportunities and the building of research infrastructure to conduct multicenter clinical trials that can rapidly test new diagnostics and treatment. Research institutions and laboratories should aim for ‘net-zero’ carbon emissions and should be required to disclose their carbon footprint.

**5.**

Advanced expertise in the field of global health, is a prerequisite for better global health solutions. To achieve this, we need to improve education through cross-disciplinary investments in global health teaching and the development of cross-cultural competencies, and research capacity. We also need to support tenure tracks for young researchers in universities in LMICs.

**6.**

Global health education and management must be decolonized through an increased awareness of colonial history and postcolonial asymmetric power relations along with equitable action against social injustice, such as unaffordable healthcare, food insecurity, vast income gaps, discrimination, human rights violations, gender inequities, corruption, educational inequalities and climate change. The inclusion and amplification of local perspectives, knowledge systems, and expertise in global health decision-making processes must be prioritized. Additionally, fostering mutually beneficial collaborations that uphold fairness and equality will facilitate global health transitions from neo-dependency to self-reliance and balanced partnerships.

**7.**

Improved preparations for future pandemics through investment in surveillance systems, ensuring an adequate supply of protective equipment and development tracks as well as production capacity for new vaccines through a legally binding accord with clear obligations for the distribution of vaccines resulting from the WHO's Pandemic Preparedness and Response Accord. Comprehensive surveillance and response systems must include all relevant stakeholders, including both public and private sector, as depletion of resources in public healthcare sectors and quality issues with private sector healthcare services are a challenge to implementing universal healthcare coverage.

**8.**

Implementing scalable interventions to increase the global health workforce capacity is imperative. There is an urgent need to recruit and train new healthcare workers capable of managing future health problems as well as international agreements to stop the ongoing drain of health workforce from LMICs. Furthermore, it is important to address underlying causes to not only provide treatment but also to focus on health promotion and disease prevention, thus promoting overall well-being, in particular given the shortage of healthcare workforce prohibiting treatment as a feasible solution to many global health challenges.

**9.**

Integrated multi-sectoral interventions for complex patients with multiple conditions resulting from several causes, which challenges health systems and needs coherent and comprehensive solutions as well as integrated care pathways that bridge cross-sectoral gaps, delivers on indigenous population health and reduces stigma.

**10.**

Immediate and decisive actions must be taken to mitigate climate change, halt biodiversity loss and to decrease pollution in order to avoid further global health impacts arising from the ongoing climate and environmental crisis. It is important to allocate resources for creation of attractive pathways for solutions addressing climate change and health.

**MATCHPOINTS CONFERENCE 2023: GLOBAL HEALTH CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS**

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