

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL HEALTH PARTNERSHIP IN BURUNDI : PROGRESS REPORT

The health-sector partners have realized that since 2000, when the targets for the millennium development goals (MDG) were defined, the progress made up to 2007 in most countries has been mixed. The Governments of the developing and developed countries, together with the principal agencies involved in improving health committed themselves to a global campaign to speed up attainment of the health-related millennium development goals. This campaign will make it possible sustainably to strengthen health systems and thus to improve health outcomes in middle- and low-income countries by setting up a framework for International Health Partnership (IHP). Burundi has been one of the pilot countries among the first group of those selected for this initiative in Africa.

The health sector in Burundi is already in the throes of a lengthy process which has resulted in the definition of a coherent sectoral policy, initiated by the Government in 2004. The National Health Policy (2005-2015) and the National Health Sector Development Plan (PNDS) for the period 2006-2010 have been approved.

Prior to the introduction of the IHP process, the sector coordinating group (CPSD) was set up in March 2007. The CPSD, whose primary mission is to provide coordinated support for the Ministry of Health and AIDS Control in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating national policies and strategies for sustainable health development, holds regular monthly meetings. It operates under the presidency of the Minister and plans the activities of the technical theme groups which bring together national contributors and development partners. This now institutionalized framework has set up theme groups charged with analysing and informing its decisions. There are currently five operational theme groups: human resources, medicines, health financing and monitoring-evaluation.

Following the launch of IHP in London and Bujumbura on 5 September 2007, a meeting of CPSD on 18 September 2007 made it possible to put the IHP concept on the partners' agenda. The terms of reference for the implementation of IHP have been drawn up, in collaboration with partners, under the guidance of the Ministry of Public Health's Directorate-General for Health. The key government departments have provided input for the process (Office of the Deputy Vice President, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Planning and Executive Secretariat of the National Council for AIDS Control).

The possibility of helping to prepare a roadmap for the development and implementation of the Compact based on the experience of other countries

regarding, in particular the Sector-Wide Approach (SWAp), was the result of a process that was both participatory and inclusive. The process, which was under the Government's leadership, was supported by all the sector's technical and financial partners and by the main international and national NGOs and civil society organizations.¹

A joint mission by key partners of the sector in October 2007, under the leadership of the Ministry of Health, on which representatives of the partner agencies were present (WHO, World Bank, UNICEF, DFID and European Commission), made it possible to draw up a memorandum of understanding between the Government and the health partners, to define results indicators for the implementation of IHP and to prepare a draft plan of action within the framework of the sector-wide approach. The memorandum of understanding, known as the « Framework for Partnership » was signed on 22 February 2008.

In February 2007, a delegation from Burundi took part in the Lusaka conference, whose purpose was to assess progress in implementation of the IHP initiative since its creation. All the 13 countries represented at the Lusaka meeting, together with their health partners agreed that the existence of the « Compact » was the best way forward. The aim of the Compact is to accelerate progress on the health-related MDG by enhancing the efficacy of assistance by introducing a framework which makes it possible to increase assistance and reduces compartmentalization, segmentation, volatility and transaction costs. It was agreed at the conference that the process of developing a country compact should take the following factors into consideration: a single country health plan, a common results framework, a common matrix for strategic guidelines, a common budget and a single monitoring and evaluation system.

Since March 2007, a road map towards implementation of the initiative and development of a compact in Burundi has been drawn up and submitted to the IHP team for funding. A first tranche has been released and the activities are under way. At the same time, campaigns have been carried out to raise awareness among all actors in the health sector.

From 25 to 27 November 2008, the Government of Burundi organized a second joint mission by the Government and its partners, whose purpose was to review progress in the health sector regarding implementation of the recommendations made by the first joint mission, and prospects for 2009. This significant activity, in which high-level delegations from the headquarters of the respective partner organizations (WHO, World Bank, UNICEF, DFID and the

¹ CORDAID, TPO-Health Net, FHI, GTZ, MSF Belgium, ANSS, SWAA, ABS, Caritas, CEPBU, OAG, RBP+, ABUBEF.

European Commission) took part, made it possible to set the timetable for implementation of the IHP initiative and development of a compact in Burundi.

The process of developing a compact for Burundi is under way and involves the preparation of a medium-term plan of action 2009-2011, of the medium-term expenditure framework 2009-2011, the results framework and the single harmonized framework for monitoring and evaluation:

- **Preparation of the Medium-Term Plan of Action (2009-2011):** the preparatory process started in November 2008 and the document is due to be approved by all the health-sector partners at the end of February. The plan of action will be associated with a results framework. This activity is funded by WHO with IHP funds;
- **Preparation of the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) 2009-2011:** The process began with a training session for Ministry of Health executives on use of the MBB (Marginal Budgeting for Bottlenecks) tool; this is a planning and budgeting tool for results-based management of health services in developing countries. The training session helped to define the costs of and funding for the interventions required to speed up progress towards the health-related MDGs in 2015. The initial results of the MTEF will be available at the end of January 2009 and validation is due in mid-February 2009. This activity is supported by the European Commission;
- **Preparation of a single harmonized framework for monitoring and evaluation:** This activity is under way with the support of the World Bank and is a priority for the activities of the monitoring-evaluation theme group for 2009 ;
- **Preparation of a draft compact for Burundi:** Burundi intends to request the IHP team for technical support in preparing a compact in February 2008, when all the tools required for the development of a compact will be at the approval stage. The process will be backed up by a major campaign to raise awareness, in order to facilitate ownership and signature, due in April 2009.

The development process has come up against a number of constraints, the most important of which are:

- **Late funding:** Implementation of the IHP initiative relied on financial support from IHP on the basis of the funding proposal submitted in February 2008. Part of these funds became available only in

November 2008. As a result, implementation of the activities has been delayed;

- **Lack of skills:** The development of a compact calls for highly skilled experts, who are not available in Burundi and use of these skills is frequently hampered by their lack of availability; as a result, we have experienced delays in respect of our schedule;

PROSPECTS FOR 2009

Actions	State of progress	Date for completion
Plan of Action 2009-2011	Being prepared	15 February 2009
Medium-term Expenditure Framework 2009-2011	Being prepared	15 February 2009
Preparation of the draft Compact	Preparation to begin on 15 February 2009	30 March 2009
Raising stakeholders' awareness	Start in March 2009	April 2009
Signature	Quarterly meeting of the policy CPSD	30 April 2009