

Providing For Health (P4H) Initiative

Background

The Providing for Health (P4H) Initiative is based on the initiatives taken by the G8 summits in Gleneagles and St. Petersburg in support of improving health systems in developing countries. Milestones for shaping the initiative were the international conference on social health insurance in Berlin in December 2005 and the international conference on social health protection in Paris, organised by President Chirac in March 2007.

At the G8 Summit in Heiligendamm in June 2007, the G8 welcomed the Providing for Health Initiative “as a means to work towards sustainable and equitable financing of health systems and improved access to quality health services, through linking of national health financing strategies with coordinated international support. The ‘Providing for Health’ Initiative will create an international platform for dialogue and collaboration on the issue of financing health systems in low- and middle-income countries and on expanding initiatives of national and international donors to improve the efficiency of increasing national and international funding.”¹

Problem Statement

Worldwide, 1.3 billion people do not have access to effective and affordable health care. In many countries, health financing relies heavily on unregulated out-of-pocket payments made at the point of service delivery. High health care costs prevent many people from seeking or continuing treatment, while some of those who seek care incur catastrophic financial burdens and many fall into poverty as a result. It is estimated that every year more than 100 million people are pushed into poverty by the need to pay for health services. Poor people are disproportionately affected as they already carry a higher burden of ill health and disease.

Only modest progress has been made in meeting the Health Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) despite increased international funding for - and commitment to - health. This progress has been made mainly in disease specific areas. However, it has become evident that improving health outcomes will not be possible without long-term strengthening of health systems which include sustainable and equitable social health protection.

Objectives of the Providing for Health Initiative

The principal objective of the Providing for Health Initiative is to strengthen health systems—their organisation, governance and financing—by putting appropriate social health protection mechanisms in place with a view to achieving universal coverage. The initiative will support partner countries in their efforts to incorporate social health protection into national health plans and programmes, including those programmes which are being financed in the

¹ Growth and Responsibility in Africa. G8 Summit Declaration (8 June 2007), Paragraph 62: http://www.g-8.de/Content/DE/Artikel/G8Gipfel/Anlage/Abschlussserkl_C3_A4rungen/WV-afrika-en.html

framework of internationally agreed health sector support. Through this, the initiative will also contribute towards harmonizing international health sector support in accordance with the Paris Agenda.

Specific objectives of P4H are:

- to enhance harmonization of external and domestic funds for expanding social health protection
- to increase and improve utilization of domestic and international resources (e.g. vertical funds, SWAps) for the development of equitable and sustainable social health protection structures
- to provide timely coordinated support for the formulation of pertinent policy options and the implementation of national strategies;
- to facilitate sharing of experiences on social protection in health and learning across countries.

Working Mechanisms

P4H will work with a light management structure. It will be supported by experts of the core group members, either through secondments to a small secretariat based in Geneva or other arrangements as appropriate, including the Consortium on Social Health Protection and the country/regional offices of P4H members. Policy guidance with a view to moving forward the initiative will be provided by biannual meetings of the P4H Steering Group.

As of date, the core group consists of Germany, France, Norway, WHO, ILO and the World Bank. P4H is a non-exclusionary partnership and other organizations are welcome to join the initiative. Involvement with P4H may range from financial or in-kind support for specific activities to longer-term joint technical or financial cooperation.

Contact

Dr. Ralf M. Mohs

Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
Head of Division Poverty Reduction and Social Protection; Coherence; Sectoral Policies
Dahlmannstr. 4
53113 Bonn
Germany
Tel.: +49 228 99 535 - 3730
Fax: +49 228 9910 535 - 3730
ralf-matthias.mohs@bmz.bund.de

Elodie Montétagaud

Health and Social Protection Unit
Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs
20, rue Monsieur
75000 SP – Paris
France
Tel. : +33 15369 3071
Fax : +33 15369 3719
elodie.montetagaud@diplomatie.gouv.fr