

Partnerships needed to achieve the health related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – Keynote speech

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The Conference on “Philanthropy in Global Health – Governance and Effectiveness Criteria” offers a unique opportunity to pursue and deepen the dialogue launched at the 2000 UN Millennium Summit aimed reducing poverty, illiteracy, sex avoidable inequalities, child deaths, maternal mortality, and major infections as well as creation of environmental stability and global partnership for development.

With focus on global health challenges it is well recognized that severe shortfalls prevail in investment required to achieve tangible success on that set in the MDGs, especially in Africa.

The views in this paper express the need to consider the impact of philanthropic initiatives vis-à-vis charity. An appropriate discussion on governance and effectiveness criteria requires at least a shared vision and principles of an undertaking that is mutually or jointly owned. From an African perspective it is imperative to discuss ways and means to foster partnerships needed to achieve the MDGs.

Africa bears the heaviest burden of the three main diseases of poverty, has weak health systems, inadequate social protection, is confronted with high levels of communicable and non communicable diseases, shortage of human resources for health, widespread poverty that perpetuate dependence; gaps in science and technology that limit utilisation of available resources; and faces multiple uncoordinated international health initiatives.

The Millennium Summit was followed by global, regional and national initiatives involving public and private actors including foundations, government departments and agencies aiming at accelerating the implementation of the Millennium Declaration. Africa responded by the Abuja 2001 Declaration on HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; followed later in 2007 by the adoption of the Africa's Health Strategy and pledge of African Union (AU) member states to facilitate inter-ministerial coordination for integrated well harmonised comprehensive response to current and new health challenges facing Africa. To maximise impact the implementation process of the African health strategy (under the framework of the AU and its socio-economic programme, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), at country level, requires collaboration with AU/Regional economic com-

munities (RECs), regional health organizations, UN agencies, private sector, development partners and civil society organizations. Implementation of the UN MDGs led to increased funding by public and private contributors to address the challenge of the major poverty related diseases through different initiatives including the Global Fund and Public Private Partnerships for development and delivery of clinical tools that contributed to increased spending on health research, much of it on diagnostics, preventive and therapeutic technologies. Despite these positive efforts one key commitment seem to have been neglected - the global partnership for development was left hanging to itself. At mid -term to 2015 target we are called to draw lessons from traditional donor recipient relations to build long term agreed strategies to develop genuine partnerships.

The experience of ongoing initiatives are discussed and their potential to be replicated is presented aiming at attainment of outcomes, namely strengthening partnerships based on knowledge sharing aimed at improving the health of the African people – fill the technology and management gaps.

Such partnerships to have a significant and lasting impact on health issues in the developing world , must result out of shared vision and principles to consolidate and build on achievements taking into consideration the needs of stakeholders that it serves.