

“Foreign Policy and Global Health – Responding to new Challenges and Setting Priorities for the Future: The Oslo Ministerial Declaration Three Years Later and Beyond”

The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Brazil, France, Indonesia, Norway, Senegal, South Africa and Thailand, founding members of the Foreign Policy and Global Health initiative, met in New York on 22 September 2010, on the margins of the 65th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, to review progress, renew commitments and focus the agenda going forward. The seven Ministers issued the following statement:

In the 2007 Oslo Ministerial Declaration we called for more attention to health as a foreign policy issue and a stronger strategic focus on the international agenda.

Together with the UN Secretary-General and the WHO Director-General, our initiative has contributed to set a global foreign policy and global health agenda, anchored in annual General Assembly debates and resolutions^[1] A/RES/63/33 and A/RES/64/108^[1]. The growing interest and engagement of countries as well as the increasing academic work related to the interface between foreign policy and global health underlines the relevance of this agenda.

The commitments, views and concerns which brought us together are even more valid and relevant today. Despite some progress made, challenges in global health, including major inequities and vulnerabilities among countries and regions, still remain and demand persistent attention. Making globalization work for all is our shared challenge and responsibility.

The most effective response to pressing global health issues depends on cooperation and partnerships. More determination and action is needed as well as concerted, strategic and coherent efforts to achieve health goals. Foreign policy areas such as security and peace building, humanitarian response, social and economic development, human rights and trade have a strong bearing on health outcomes. We will continue to maintain preparedness for dialogue and action across the broader agenda as opportunities arise.

In renewing our commitment to the 2007 Oslo Ministerial Declaration and moving forward, together we will give particular attention to the following selected policy areas:

- Millennium Development Goals

Failure to meet the MDGs is a threat to peace and security, development and human rights, which are the pillars of the UN system. The achievements of any State in the promotion and protection of health is of value to all. We must translate political commitment into concrete deeds. Together we will engage in policy dialogue and identify specific obstacles and solutions to achieving the health related MDGs. We will have a special focus on HIV, women and children, as well as on neglected diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis, with a human rights based approach. We welcome the UN Secretary-General's Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health.

The achievement of the MDGs by 2015 will require political will at all levels, national ownership and leadership, additional financial resources as well as adequate, predictable and regular flows of ODA. Innovative financing mechanisms also have an important contribution in this respect. International cooperation, including South-South and triangular cooperation, has a significant role to play in these endeavors. Together we will explore alternative ways and means to promote sustainable and structural impact on health and development in an interested third country, on the basis of shared best practices and lessons learned within our group.

We commit ourselves to promote universal health coverage in the multilateral agenda as a means to guarantee the equal right of every human being to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

We reiterate our willingness to seeking universal access to medicines that are affordable, safe, effective and of good quality, as well as to a fairer access to vaccines in situations of pandemics. We also reiterate our commitment to pursue innovative sources of financing for research and development in neglected diseases.

- Global Governance for Health

Global Governance for Health is increasingly being challenged by new realities of an interdependent world. On the one side, there is a need to simplify the global health architecture and make it more effective, efficient and responsive. On the other side, there is a need to give more attention to the interface between health governance and governance in traditional foreign

policy domains. Together we will make Global Governance for Health outcomes the overarching and cross-cutting theme for our initiative. As Foreign Ministers, we will give particular attention to relevant multilateral processes with high impact on health. We will join efforts to enhance the visibility and awareness of health impact in these fora. We will engage with other interested parties in moving forward a Global Governance for Health fit for purpose.

- Imbalances in the Global Health Workforce Market

We note with concern the persistent lack of skilled health workers, as well as their uneven distribution within countries and throughout the world, in particular the shortage in sub-Saharan Africa, and welcome the adoption by the 63rd session of the World Health Assembly of the Code of Practice for the International Recruitment of Health Workers.

We welcome the Second Global Forum on Human Resources for Health, which will take place during the Prince Mahidol Award Conference 2011 in Bangkok.

Together we will explore potential solutions as well as actions in the foreign policy domain that support the implementation of the Code. Information and communications technology has an important contribution to give in this respect.

- Protecting peoples' health in situations of crises

In emergency situations and during conflicts, essential State functions needed to protect public health and ensure access to essential health care are challenged. Access to and protection of/for health personnel during emergencies is also critical. Mobilizing resources for health is a cornerstone of rapid response and early recovery. Protecting and promoting health in ways that enhance citizen involvement is a contribution to recovery, democratization, trust and confidence in the future. Together we will focus on opportunities and obstacles in terms of health protection and health recovery in ongoing reviews of the global humanitarian and peace building systems and processes.

- Establishing the evidence base

Through an analytical study, together we will work to establish better evidence about policy impact in the interface between health and selected traditional foreign policy disciplines, in order to contribute to strengthening preparedness, informing negotiations and demonstrating results.

- WHO Conference on Social Determinants of Health

We welcome the convening of the World Health Organization Conference on Social Determinants of Health in Brazil in 2011. Together we will engage in the discussions and contribute to its successful outcome.

We take note with appreciation of Brazil's offer to host our next meeting, which is scheduled to take place at the end of 2010.

New York, 22 September 2010.