



GROUP OF FIFTEEN
The Summit Level Group of Developing Countries

Distribution: General

G-15 Joint Statement

To the Sixty-ninth World Health Assembly, Geneva:

23 – 28 May 2016

‘Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Fifteen (G-15), a Summit Level Group of Developing Countries that aim for mutually beneficial cooperation and collaboration while realizing sustainable development and economic progress.
2. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) provided an impetus for development cooperation while also setting a framework in which global partnerships could be carried out. The unprecedented attention the MDGs received enabled it to be one of the most influential international efforts to focus on the needs of developing countries and to set their priorities which enabled greater resource mobilisation for the social sectors, including health and education.
3. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a plan of action for the ‘people, planet and prosperity’ built on the three pillars of social, economic and environment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Group appreciates the adoption of the new Development Agenda in September, 2015. The Foreign Ministers of the Group have identified the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a key global process for the G-15 to be involved and contribute to its implementation as a niche Group of the Global South. As the 2030 Agenda comes into effect this year, setting new global norms for development in the next 15 years, we welcome this timely discussion in this august Assembly. The WHO and health policy makers of our respective governments have an important role in fulfilling the targets related to the 2030 Agenda, in particular goal 3 on health and other interlinked goals.
4. In addition to the renewed commitments, addressing the MDG’s unfinished agenda, the Group welcomes the inclusion of new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the areas of Non-Communicable Diseases (NDCs), substance abuse, road traffic accidents, and chemical, air, water and soil pollution and contaminations which represent increasing health risks in the contemporary world.
5. While acknowledging that the primary responsibility of implementation of the ambitious 2030 Agenda lies with the respective governments, it is a fact that most developing and least developed countries will face a greater challenge in operationalizing the agreed commitments, given the national resource constraints. In this context, the global partnerships should be intensified from the MDG era, and in this regard, our Group hopes that the commitments made in the new Development Agenda in mobilizing financial resources and capacity building to developing countries and the reaffirmed commitments by developed countries to achieve Official Development Assistance targets (ODAs) would be operationalized sustainably, in order for developing countries to keep on par with the required progress.

6. The G-15 remains concerned that global health Research and Development (R&D) is currently not being aligned with the fulfilling of priority health requirements of developing countries. The Group invites governments and other stakeholders to partner in this area, in line with target 3.B of the new Development Agenda, to support the research and development of vaccines and medicines for the communicable and non-communicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries. In this regard, we welcome the innovative mechanisms to put in place a Global R&D that incorporates principles enunciated in the Consultative Expert Working Group (CEWG), and invites all countries to positively consider these mechanisms and contribute to their operationalization.
7. The Group remains concerned on increasing prices of potentially life-saving medicines that are critical to public health priorities and call on for renewed international attention under the new Development Agenda framework, to create urgent international policy space to facilitate equitable access to affordable, quality, safe and efficacious medicines, including generics, immunization services, safe vaccines and advanced medical technologies for combating diseases and also recognize the leading role of WHO in this process.
8. The Group is cautious that global adversities such as a financial crisis or sudden emergence of epidemics could off-track countries in achieving progress on the new Development Agenda. This was well observed during the recent Ebola crises where the achievements made in MDGs by the affected countries were severely challenged. The Group notes that developing countries are the most affected by emerging epidemics, as demonstrated through the Ebola and Zika outbreaks. Thus, our Group notes the importance of strengthening the capacity of developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks, to mitigate the risk of such epidemics and thereby to avoid any potential global epidemics. The Group reiterates its call for renewed global partnerships, in particular to strengthen the capacities of developing countries, enabling national resilience to deal with such crisis situations.
9. The Group notes the ambitious target of ending epidemics of AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria while calling for vigilance for threats posed by increasing resistance to Antimicrobial drugs including multi-drug resistant Malaria and HIV. The excessive use of antimicrobials in animal feeds, inappropriate human use and the lack of new and approved antimicrobial drugs would be detrimental towards our efforts to reach these ambitious targets. The challenge of combating antimicrobial resistance cannot be addressed by any one country, or even a single region of the world alone. There is an urgent need for collective action to ensure responsible use of antimicrobials in both humans and in animal husbandry and to reduce the burden of antimicrobial resistance in the environment. In this context, the Group recognizes that countries with limited resources and vulnerable healthcare systems need particular attention from the International Community in strengthening antimicrobial stewardship and infection prevention and control, as well as in reinforcing cooperation in research & development investments.
10. Finally the Group wishes to recall that world leaders pledged for 'bold and transformative steps' when they adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Group hopes that this pledge will be transformed into action in its entirety, in order to achieve the ambitious targets that we have collectively set for our future. The Group reaffirms its firm conviction of WHO's leading role in shaping global health policies and in engaging and coordinating global health partners. Our Group further encourages the WHO on its continued commitment to achieve the 2030 Agenda goals.