PDF version

Executive summary

1. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) marked a significant and effective framework of global mobilization to achieve a set of important developmental priorities worldwide. They had several strengths that that will provide a good basis for establishing the new Sustainable Development Goals. The MDGs were packaged as an easily understandable set of eight goals, with measurable and time-bound objectives. This helped to promote global awareness, strengthen political commitment and accountability, improve metrics and increase community participation. However, they also had weaknesses, particularly in the dimensions of equity, human rights and social determinants of health which were not well articulated or monitored. In addition, important health priorities were excluded from the MDGs, including the increasing burden of noncommunicable diseases. Member States in the Eastern Mediterranean Region have made substantial progress towards achievement of the health-related Millennium Development Goals 1, 4, 5 and 6, although the progress is variable both across and within countries. There is agreement among the global health community and governments to continue improving health and reducing disparities in the post-2015 era, building on the unfinished agenda of the MDGs.

2. The United Nations General Assembly will convene a summit to adopt the post-2015 development agenda during the 70th session of the General Assembly from 25 to 27 September 2015. Seventeen Sustainable Development Goals have been proposed (Annex 1), with 169 associated targets and supported by the three pillars of sustainability: economic development, environmental protection and social equity. Goal 3 aims to “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”, while health also cuts across the majority of the other SDGs. It has nine targets that address the unfinished agenda of the MDGs, the rising burden of noncommunicable diseases and cross-cutting systems-focused targets (including universal health coverage). It is vital that, for areas included under the health goal, global and regional targets and indicators that have already been set are harmonized with the list of SDG indicators which is expected to be finalized in March 2016.

3. In working to meet the targets of the SDGs, WHO will continue to support Member States of the Region in addressing the priority health areas identified, in line with existing WHO strategies and initiatives. Member States have a vital role to play in ensuring that the post-2015 agenda is driven by the principles of good governance, political leadership and accountability as these will do much to ensure the overall success of the SDGs. This paper provides a summary of the progress made in achieving the health-related MDGs in Member States of the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region and the main challenges. It also provides a brief account of the current status of the SDGs, with focus on Goal 3, and a way forward that includes harmonizing the targets of Goal 3 with existing WHO strategies and roadmaps.

This summary is extracted and reproduced from the Technical Discussion Paper “From the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals in the post-2015 development agenda” presented at the Sixty-second session of the WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean in Kuwait 5–8 October 2015 (EM/RC62/Tech.Disc.2). The full paper is available on the Regional Office web site at: http://applications.emro.who.int/docs/RC_technical_papers_2015_tech_disc_2_16500_EN.pdf?ua=1

Thursday 11th of July 2024 12:54:06 AM