



Statement by EuroHealthNet at the 67th session of WHO Regional Committee for Europe on the 'Roadmap to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, building on Health 2020 - the European policy for health and well-being' (agenda item 5a) as well as the outcomes of the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health" (agenda item 5b)

Today's living patterns are both unsustainable and unfair. We are damaging global ecosystems, depleting our resources, generating pollution and creating conditions that widen health inequalities. Our sedentary way of living, overconsumption of processed foods, as well as the stresses of daily life, and social isolation for some, are linked to growing levels of chronic diseases. The negative consequences of our "consumer societies" are falling disproportionately on low socio-economic groups and on those living in deprived neighbourhoods. The Roadmap to implement the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development is about our planet's survival and making it a decent and fair place for all to live in.

To deal with these issues and the many complex challenges, it is crucial to develop ways of working across sectors that enable progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and action along the 169 targets. The 'determinants approach' to health, which is advocated by Health2020, is the most effective way of linking and positioning public health with the SDGs and 2030 Agenda.

Active mobilization of other sectors

We must work beyond policy sectors and silos. The focus must be on the links between policy sectors, as this is where new solutions will be found. For example, reducing health inequalities requires social investments, improving the employability of people as well as quality childhood conditions, parenting programmes and fair social protection systems. To enable healthy living, we need to team up with the environmental sector to ensure green spaces, conditions for active travel, and energy efficient housing. For sustainable and healthy food consumption we need to work with the agricultural sector and with businesses. We must develop the overall interrelated governance of separate sectors, and ensure they all contribute, so that it aligns with the SDGs. WHO should take the lead and not just invite, but actively encourage and mobilize other sectors to actions where synergies can be achieved.

Achieving a participatory society

We will only achieve sustainable societies if we address the real needs and concerns of people, adapt our approaches, and work **with** the people. Measures to achieve the SDGs should aim, in particular, to empower people across the social gradient to live in ways that protect and promote their health and sustain the environment. Special attention should be paid to vulnerable people, who have lower health literacy, and fewer coping resources. Their scope for healthier and sustainable lives is far more limited, they are locked in their everyday living conditions and have less choice. Engagement, empowerment, and working with the assets people have is the key to change. Innovation and information technology can support this transformation to a participatory society. In addition to improved health literacy, we should also work towards improving sustainability literacy. For example, improved literacy about how our food is being produced can stimulate more conscious food choices, using products from local



farmers, which in turn will also give local benefits, local jobs. WHO should make real efforts to work in partnership with others and reach out to citizens.

Guidance on the commercial determinants of health

Coherent strategies need to be developed that foster economic progress, but without compromising health and the environment. More effective policies and regulations are required to manage the strategies and approaches used by unsustainable and unhealthy industries to produce and promote their products. At the same time, the public sector is lagging behind in a society where innovation, information and technology are moving fast. For example, much is still to be done and knowledge to be gathered on the circular economy, and how it can be implemented to achieve positive impacts. More can be done by governments and investors to support innovation and sustainable business models. The WHO Roadmap should give further guidance on the commercial determinants of health and how they can be addressed.

Strengthening public health and health promotion institutions and EuroHealthNet's role

National public health institutes and related health promoting organisations have an important role to play to facilitate inter-sectoral work and contribute to new solutions to achieve the SDGs. However, we are worried. Some national health promotion institutes are merging, others see their funding reduced or are even disappearing. Funding for health promotion and prevention and for coordinating inter-sectoral work represents a very small proportion of overall health budgets and is often inadequate. The need to sustain strong public health institutions and develop workforce capacity in terms of numbers and levels of competence, is crucial if effective action is to be taken and SDG targets to be achieved.

EuroHealthNet welcomes the envisaged national development plans and is keen to work together with WHO Regional Office and Member States through our membership organisations and partners and our function to share experiences and learning between public health institutions in the Member States. We are building evidence and inspiration in relation to policies for sustainable moving, consuming and living through large EU initiatives, such as INHERIT (www.inherit.eu). We support Joint Actions on health inequalities and chronic diseases and find alignment with EU mechanisms to implement SDGs and work across all policies. We presented our REJUVENATE Framework on promoting health and wellbeing in the context of the UN 2030 Agenda at the 9th Global Conference on health promotion in the Sustainable Development Goals in Shanghai, November last year and are ready to contribute again.

EuroHealthNet congratulates WHO on the Roadmap to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and on the Declaration of the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health. We fully support these initiatives as commented above and are wholeheartedly committed to contribute to their implementation. We would like to restate our readiness to work in cooperation with Member States and WHO Europe to help achieve these common goals.