

WHO EUROPEAN HEALTHY CITIES NETWORK

STATEMENT OF SUPPORT ON

**Promoting intersectoral and interagency action for
health and well-being in the WHO European Region
High-level Conference
7-8 December 2016, Paris, France**



We, the 100 cities and 30 national networks, covering a further 1500 cities, express our wholehearted support for the high-level conference on promoting intersectoral and interagency action for health and well-being in the WHO European Region: working together for better health and well-being, Paris, France, 7–8 December 2016.

We are fully dedicated to the development of all our citizens and communities, with a strong commitment to future generations, and to improving the health and well-being of our children.

We strongly reiterate our commitment to acting across the health, education, and social sectors, as improving the health and well-being of our young people and future generations requires cross-sectoral collaboration to ensure that no child is left behind. Working in partnership with other sectors has been a fundamental principle of the Healthy Cities approach since its inception nearly 30 years ago. We can support our national ministries to achieve this collaboration at the national level by working with each sector to encourage and facilitate collaboration at the municipal level.

Given the important role of cities and municipal administrations in tackling issues such as inequalities and vulnerabilities, we are at the forefront of implementing the agenda outlined in the conference outcome declaration, *Partnerships for the health and well-being of our young and future generations*, and ensuring that it reaches our young and future generations. This century will see a substantial majority of the world's population living in urban centres. This increasing urbanization means that cities are central to efforts to improve people's health and are a crucial setting in which to sustainably improve the societies in which our young people and future generations will grow up. Therefore, these issues are often best tackled at the city and municipal level.

We fully acknowledge that the conference focused on equity and was gender transformative, and that these are necessary elements of the process of achieving the goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Cities are places where sectors and services naturally converge, and without action at the city level it is not possible to take this process forward. Engaging with people at the city level, through health, education, and social services, as well as through participatory governance processes that empower people to take ownership of their own health and well-being is imperative for tackling health inequalities, as much of the service provision necessary to provide universal social protection is administered at the city level. Cities are crucial to implementing and fulfilling the transformative agenda for change proposed in the conference outcome declaration as we work closely with all the services and sectors involved.

We recognize the link between the topics of the conference, Health 2020, the European policy framework for health and well-being, and the 2030 Agenda. We commit to acting together across sectors to improve the health and well-being of children and adolescents as part of our national governments' commitments to both Health 2020 and the 2030 Agenda.

We recognize that disadvantage runs from parent to child and from childhood to adulthood. Similarly, health inequities are reproduced over time and across generations through the life course. We acknowledge that these inequities can be tackled by pursuing intersectoral policies that address the social determinants of health.

We recognize that high-quality evidence and data are required to monitor progress and explore innovative forms of governance. Resources and local-level data collected at the national level are required to achieve this. On this issue, we can function as policy and implementation laboratories. We can act as catalysts of ideas and be leaders for change. Our ability to adapt to external challenges makes us responsive to innovation.

Migration is an important issue faced by cities in Europe. The integration of migrants and refugees, including unaccompanied children, and the provision of equity-focused and gender and culturally sensitive services cannot be achieved without action taking place at the municipal level, as cities are often the settings where people arrive, settle, and are available to engage with. Enhancing citizens' engagement and participation is especially important in integrating migrants and creating services that meet the needs of vulnerable groups.

Cities have a natural relationship with schools. In order for a school to effectively engage with the community and improve the health and well-being of children and adolescents, in line with a whole-of-society approach, the municipality must work closely together with all relevant sectors, including the sectors responsible for schools, culture, physical activity, and youth. We are committed to fostering this relationship and ensuring that it is sustainable.

We are delighted that this process of encouraging and facilitating cooperation between sectors is being taken forward, and are aware that this conversation needs to continue. We are crucial to the continuation and sustainability of this process.

Recognizing the importance of this process, we fully support the establishment of a platform to ensure that the discussion continues after the conference. Whole-of-society approaches, including those that engage the wider community, civil society and the private sector, are crucial for improving child and adolescent health and well-being, while empowering and fostering resilient communities.

We are committed, we are engaged, and we are an important part of implementing the conference vision and taking the agenda forward in a sustainable manner. This is our common vision, and we can join forces to continue to build on the legacy of the WHO Healthy Cities Network in innovating for better intersectoral action, and ensuring sustainable and equitable development and better health and well-being for future generations.

We, the WHO European Healthy Cities Network, adopt this statement, and will take forward this agenda, using the Paris conference of 7–8 December 2016 as a starting point for further engagement, collaboration, and action.

The WHO Regional Office for Europe

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