



Health promotion and disease prevention throughout the life-course

THE ANDORRA STATEMENT

Second high-level meeting of the WHO small countries initiative, Soldeu, Andorra

We, the Ministers and delegates of the Member States in the European Region of the World Health Organization with populations of less than one million, met in Andorra on 2–3 July 2015 to participate in the second high-level meeting of the small countries initiative.

We reconfirm the values stated in the San Marino Manifesto (2014) and reiterate our firm commitment to implement the Health 2020 framework and its principles and approaches in our national policies, strategies and plans.

As small countries, we give paramount importance to the development of all our citizens and communities, with a strong commitment to social trust and equity.

Being small in numbers, we believe each and every person represents a unique asset. We, the small countries, are committed to enable each individual to develop his or her full potential in each phase of life.

We are aware that research conclusively shows that early adverse experiences can affect development and increase vulnerability to a broad range of physical illness and mental problems when one bears in mind the impact of the accumulation of risk throughout the life-course.

Additionally, we are aware of equally convincing evidence, which indicates that health promotion and disease prevention programmes in early stages of life are not only cost-effective, but are also investments that bring high returns in terms of economic and social development, and equity. We aim to ensure that every opportunity for health enhancement and disease prevention is taken starting from pre-conception to pregnancy and other critical periods in one's life.

Equipped with this evidence, we reiterate our full commitment towards the life-course approach proposed by the Health 2020 policy framework. Fostering health promotion and disease prevention throughout the life-course enables us to tackle the causes of ill health and intervene on its negative consequences, thus supporting well-being and a better quality of life. We acknowledge that many countries have adopted the life-course approach in their various implementing strategies. We also firmly believe that the life-course approach should form an integral part of training of health professionals and, indeed, all other professionals working in the social field.

It is both never too early to invest in health promotion and disease prevention, and never too late to improve health and well-being and address the challenges of our ageing populations.

We, the small countries, despite having diverse circumstances and because of our unique social ecology, provide the ideal settings to carry forward this 21st-century approach, starting at the prenatal stage and following a trajectory covering the whole life-course by utilizing different settings and taking into account the compounding health effect that each phase of life has on the subsequent one.

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 pathways. We acknowledge that these inequities can be tackled through pursuing intersectoral policies that address the social determinants of health. We recognize that this requires us to collect high-quality evidence and data to report on and monitor progress and to explore innovative forms of governance. On this issue, we, the small countries, can function as policy and implementation laboratories. We can act as a catalyst of ideas and be leaders for change. Our capability for rapid adaptation to external challenges makes us strategically agile and naturally receptive to innovation. Small countries can provide crucial elements to foster best practices for the life-course approach with our structural, strategic and innovative strengths – setting an example for other countries.

It is in this spirit that we commit to act as norm entrepreneurs to adopt comprehensive, intersectoral, integrated measures to prevent and address risk factors, and medical and social concerns that result in major health inequalities. We commit to do so through a life-course approach, with a proactive focus on policies creating a long-term culture of health that unfolds as an integrated continuum.

This is our common vision, and we can join forces as a platform to launch better sustainable development and better health for our populations.

Acting early, acting on time, acting together – this is our mission, our call and our priority.



Andorra



Cyprus



Iceland



Luxembourg



Malta



Monaco



Montenegro



San Marino