



The Global Action Plan in Ukraine: coming together for healthy lives and well-being

Health has been and is staying very high on the agenda of United Nations agencies and international partners in Ukraine. This is also reflected in the funding devoted to the health sector. Current estimates are that Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 (good health and well-being) is second only to SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) in terms of financing for the SDGs by the United Nations in Ukraine.

The importance of a well-performing health system and well-performing public health services, including health security, is increasing as the country is responding to the COVID-19 outbreak while trying to ensure continued provision of and access to essential health services.

Realizing the importance of coordinating and promoting the SDG health agenda at the local level, the WHO Country Office in Ukraine launched quarterly interagency meetings on health and well-being with the support of the United Nations family. These meetings have been ongoing since April 2019, when international development partners came together to discuss general developments related to the SDGs, particularly the mainstreaming of health in governmental policies.

This interagency platform provided an opportunity to share the concept and implementation timeline of the Global Action Plan for Health and Well-being (GAP) with GAP partners and other development partners, such as United Nations organizations (e.g. FAO and UNODC), United Nations Volunteers Programme, bilateral organizations and international nongovernmental organizations active in Ukraine.

Of the 12 global GAP partners, nine are presently active in Ukraine. These are the Global Fund, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNITAID, UN Women, the World Bank and WHO. The selection of potential GAP accelerators to achieve SDG 3 on health has been discussed with all these partners. Based on the interagency meetings to date, four GAP accelerators were considered a priority in the country context:

- primary health care
- health financing
- data systems
- humanitarian work in vulnerable settings.

After further discussion at the meeting in February 2020, it was decided that primary health care should become the one accelerator that can include and mainstream all the others. Consequently, in order to capitalize on comparative advantages and strengthen synergies between agencies, primary health care was chosen for further targeted work with the partners in piloting the GAP mechanisms.

Joint work by the partners, however, is not limited to one area, and broader discussions and sharing continue around providing support for the overall national SDG agenda. For example, the United Nations family is closely and actively supporting the ongoing development from the Voluntary National Review on SDG implementation that was presented in July 2020 at the High-level Political Forum under the auspices of the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

Encouraged by the development of the GAP, a multistakeholder policy dialogue on implementation of the health-related SDG goals and targets was organized by the Ministry of Health and WHO in Kiev in May 2019 to raise awareness about the SDGs, the other health-related targets and their relevance to current health reforms in Ukraine, highlighting health system achievements and work on health-related SDG targets and health determinants. The potential support that could be provided under the GAP to the priorities of the Ministry of Health was discussed.



In addition, WHO has completed the review and report on the five-year progress on health and well-being in Ukraine, providing recommendations on how to ensure the achievement of the health-related SDG targets and to promote health and well-being, leaving no one behind.

The following five key recommendations were made.

- **To align priority actions of all sector stakeholders:** there is a need to align national SDG targets and indicators with the global SDGs while ensuring that actions of national and international partners are coordinated and contribute to the priorities of the national health system transformation agenda.
- **To increase fiscal space for sustainable health financing:** securing the legislated 5% of GDP for health financing is an investment that can provide societal and economic returns well beyond the principle investment and can help to bridge the policy–planning–budget gap for the achievement of the SDGs.
- **To expand disaggregated health data systems:** a focus on relevant, timely and accurate data should drive considerations for the expansion of data sources and how they can be structured to enhance health equity.
- **To improve access to quality health services:** access needs to be improved for preventive and curative health services, while ensuring protection of vulnerable populations.
- **To support the development of a resilient health workforce:** efforts must be intensified to train, recruit and retain knowledgeable health workers and to provide them with access to opportunities to enhance the competencies needed for their positions.

Partners who participated in the discussions at the country level to date:

