



Statement by EuroHealthNet at the 66th session of WHO Regional Committee for Europe on the topic: 'Health in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its relation to Health 2020' (agenda item 5a)

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development offers new opportunities for health promotion to improve governance and ensure sustainable policy making while implementing its values, principles and approaches in a new global context.

We welcome the initiative to support action in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and link with Health 2020 Strategy. Much needs to be done and can be facilitated by the UN Agenda 2030 which requires transformative processes to be undertaken globally and nationally to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Our extensive partnerships consist of (sub) national public health and health promotion authorities as well as of research institutes and strategic partners from other sectors. Many of our members are involved in developing and implementing the SDGs and also the WHO Health 2020 Strategy in their own countries or regions. As the leading European Partnership for improving health, equity and wellbeing, EuroHealthNet contributes with knowledge and experience, and shares our vision on what we want health promotion to achieve by 2030.

We would like to highlight three priorities in relation with the proposed topic:

1. *We need to **move forward by promoting health in a rapidly changing world**. We need to draw shared values regarding equity and well-being in modern settings while adapting continuously and acting on the realities we face.*

Equity, social justice, well-being and reducing health inequalities while building sustainable health systems are at the heart of Health 2020. Global and European demographic, economic, social, environmental and technological changes are challenging these values. To ensure progress, cross-cutting and joint efforts are needed as outlined in the SDGs and subsequent targets. The UN Agenda 2030 has to be supported by a public health and health promotion community which is more attentive, responsive, dynamic and innovative.

2. *Stronger focus is needed for **sustainable and integrated policy making** to address the diversity of health determinants. We need to improve liaison and cooperation, present better our evidence and results, negotiate smarter and explore compromises to pave for next steps.*

Action across government and society to address the diversity of health determinants is the core aim of Health2020. Now we understand better the scope of these determinants and we have learnt to build bridges with other influential policy areas. The SDGs are an opportunity to address the social determinants of health through integrated and sustainable policy making. The SDGs aiming to end poverty, ensure healthy lives and well-being for all, inclusive and quality equitable education, full and productive employment and decent work for all and their subsequent targets are a stimulus for action. There is no magic bullet to



address health inequalities; a policy mix is needed in the evolving and complex playing field taking place at local, regional, national and global levels.

3. *We would welcome greater emphasis on **safeguarding health as human right and a value in itself** and demonstrate its value to inclusive economic growth and prosperity. We need to develop leadership, skills and capacities to deliver ‘whole-of-society’ strategies which contribute in a meaningful way to the SDGs.*

We need to increase **capacity building at all levels**; support can be provided by the WHO Regional Office for Europe, but also by other international organisations. We should be better prepared to **build and apply new knowledge**, including using new insights into societal and economic models, on digitalisation and the influence of (social) media, to anticipate, evaluate and respond to technological and scientific developments from a health equity perspective. We have to be at the forefront of progress by researching, informing, empowering communities and involving people.

The support of WHO Regional Office for Europe is also valuable in **transforming health systems** and value health promotion and disease prevention in health systems performance, outcome and sustainability. We have evidence and can make the case for better investments in which promoting health and curing disease are both mechanisms to improve population’s health. We need to build coalitions to champion the importance of strengthening health promotion and disease prevention and transform struggling health curative systems into health promoting systems which are more resilient to economic shocks and crisis.

EuroHealthNet would welcome partnerships; we would be keen to participate in meaningful collaborations to ensure that health promotion and public health are real contributors to the implementation of the Health 2020 Strategy, the UN Agenda 2030, and SDGs.

In particular, we encourage **liaison with EU mechanisms across all policies**, such as the EU Semester processes, a potential EU Pillar of Social Rights, and the ideas within the EU Social Investment Package. EuroHealthNet has two decades of knowledge of working across policy and practice sectors and EU institutions relevant to Agenda 2030 and Health 2030, so restates its readiness to work in partnership with States and WHO Europe to help achieve common goals.

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