International Policy Dialogue on Implementing Health Impact Assessment on the regional and local level
11-12 February 2008, Seville

Health impact assessment: the WHO perspective

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Outline of this presentation

Why is it important for WHO’s work?

Expected outcomes
WHO-EURO’s Aim (“Matching Services to Needs”, 2000)

To support Member States in:

- developing their own health policies, health systems and public health programmes
- preventing and overcoming threats to health;
- anticipating future challenges; and
- advocating public health.
WHO supports the assessment of the impact of any public policy on health, the inclusion of health in all policies and the attention to the social determinants of health.
Issues of interest in health:

- Levels

- Distribution

(Biology and life make us different; ensuring that no unfair disadvantages to anyone derive from it is the characteristic of civilized societies!)
Health indicators have improved in the last 25 years but enormous differences are revealed when fragmenting by strata.
Differential burden of disease between the poorest and richest countries in the world

Richest countries

Poorest countries

DALYs per 1000 population

Non-communicable diseases

Other conditions
There indeed are enormous differences in health and wealth in the European region (range of around 35-40 years in average life expectancy and ratios of 50:1 in income among the highest and the lowest social groups! - e.g. rich people in Luxembourg or Norway compared to poor people in Tajikistan
What good does it do to treat people’s illnesses, and then send them back to the conditions that made them sick?

Sir Michael Marmot
Governance is key...

- Health impact assessment: most countries
- Wanless reports in the UK
- Targets programmes: Finland (2001), UK, France
- Reducing inequalities: the Netherlands (2001)
WHO/EURO’s response

SUPPORT TO COUNTRIES - WHO Country Strategy

HEALTH AND EQUITY - Future of WHO/EURO by 2020

HEALTH GOVERNANCE - Health Systems Strategy
Consensus on addressing health determinants...

.... but more evidence on inter-sectoral strategies needed
LEADING ACTION FOR HIA

• What are key obstacles and challenges in different contexts?

• What works to mainstream action across government to improve health?

• How to strengthen role of Ministries of Health (MOH) in ‘leading’ an agenda in favour of health?

• What is feasible in high, middle and low-income countries?
The role of Ministry of Health at the driving seat of inter-sectorality

- Empowering Ministries of Health (central and regional)
- Persuading other ministries: e.g. MoF
- Political will
- Governance mechanisms
- Power and capacity issues
- Innovation e.g. communication skills, working with media
Promoting inter-sectorality
Some WHO initiatives

- International health regulations
- Tobacco framework convention
- Budapest conference on Environment and health
- European Charter on Counteracting Obesity, 16 November 2006, Istanbul
“This world of today simply moves too fast. Improvements, politics, reform, religion, all fly!”

Philip Hone, Former Major of New York City

…reacting in 1844 to Samuel Morse’s telegraph

Through promoting HIA the WHO wants to increase its accountability

“The obligation (...) to provide information about, and/or justification for their actions to other actors (...) to comply and/or to engage in appropriate action”

Are we, all the actors, institutions and resources devoted to producing actions to improve, maintain and/or restore health doing our best?
RC 55

The Health System Strategy and related documents as well as resolution EUR/ RC55/ R8 aim at helping Member States overcome the challenges they face.
The WHO Conference on “Health Systems, Health and Wealth” in Tallinn (Estonia), 25-27 June 2008 is intended to be a key opportunity to promote health system development in the context of social welfare and inter-sectoral action.
Three Conference slogans

Beyond health care: health system for health and wealth (Health Systems)

Invest in health, invest in the future (Wealth)

Strengthening health systems save more lives (Health)
Key aims of the WHO European Ministerial Conference:

- placing Health System high in the political agenda given the increasing pressures on them to ensure sustainability and solidarity

- improving understanding of the impact of health systems on people’s health and therefore on economic growth in the WHO European Region; and

- taking stock of recent evidence on effective strategies to improve health systems performance.
Research / Evidence

Two commissioned studies on central conference themes

Health Systems, Health and Wealth
Assessing Health Systems Performance

Policy brief series:

13 briefs on key Health system strategies

Relevant studies underway in WHO/ other organizations

E.g. Health financing reforms in CEE / NIS
E.g. Responding to the epidemic of chronic disease (OBS)
E.g. Studies from WB, OECD, Council of Europe,…
A European Charter on Health Systems will be developed and presented for adoption at the Ministerial Conference, as suggested by the Conference External Advisory Board (EAB)

Spring 2008 (Rome) - Third preparatory meeting: “Health System Governance”
3rd draft of European Charter on Health System

19-20 Nov. 2007, Ljubljana - Second preparatory meeting: Health service delivery
2nd draft of European Charter on Health System

6 October, Gastein, Austria - 1st meeting of Charter Drafting Group

17-20 September 2007, Serbia - RC 57 session: Health workforce policies

27 June 2007, WHO/ EURO Copenhagen - 3rd External Advisory Board meeting

29-30 March 2007, Belgium - First preparatory meeting: Assessing HS performance

15 March 2007 - Signing of MoU with Estonia, Host country announced

11, 12 January 2007, WHO/ EURO - 2nd External Advisory Board meeting

31 October- 1 November 2007, Barcelona - 1st External Advisory Board meeting

30-31 October 2006 - Consultative meeting Barcelona

24-25 August 2006 - Consultative meeting Vienna

12 - 15 September 2005 - Regional Committee 55, Resolution (EUR/RC55/R8) endorsed to hold the Health System Ministerial Conference
Programme, Tallinn 25-27 June 2008

- Two and half day event,
- Some 500 participants, experts and policy makers
- Ministries of Health of 53 European Member States and relevant national organisations,
- Other Ministers (esp. Finance/Economy),
- Relevant key note speakers,
- International agencies and NGOs,
- Substantive attention by the Media
Further information:

www.euro.who.int/healthsystems2008

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Thank you