



The Taskforce on Innovative International Financing for Health Systems

4 March 2009

Taskforce on Innovative International Financing for Health Systems meets in London on 13 March

- 100 million of the world's poorest forced back into poverty due to the current financial crisis -

- Taskforce convened to drive forward UN Millennium Development Goals on health to help end global poverty by 2015-

LONDON: On 13 March 2009 world leaders will convene in London for the meeting of the Taskforce on Innovative International Financing, co-chaired by UK PM Gordon Brown and World Bank President, Robert Zoellick. This Thursday (5 March) the capital will host a precursor meeting to the Taskforce when 60 senior Civil Society delegates from across the globe meet. Hailing from prominent NGOs, charities and civil society, participants to this Thursday's consultation will engage in a day-long seminar to share experiences, key learnings and recommendations on innovative financing for health.

The United Nations key health Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) form part of the overriding MDGs to end poverty by 2015. At present the three health goals; to cut child mortality rates; improve maternal care and combat HIV AIDS and malaria are lagging. In September 2008 world leaders came together in New York, convened by the UN, to renew commitments to achieving the MDGs. It is estimated an additional US\$30 billion is needed to save 10 million lives – 3 million mothers and 7 million children. Stronger health systems are critical to saving these lives and require urgent resources from the international community. The Taskforce is a response to concerns that greater financing must be secured and it will play a leading role in accelerating progress towards the health MDGs and will seek to co-ordinate the work of the international community.

The World Bank estimates that, if the current economic crisis persists, between 200,000 and 400,000 more children will die every year – between 1.4 and 2.8 million children before 2015. Any reduction in investment in healthcare will have devastating consequences for the sick and untreated, and has the potential to plunge new groups and nations into poverty.



The Taskforce on Innovative International Financing for Health Systems

The Facts – why funds are needed now:

- ! Halfway to 2015, numerous countries are lagging behind in reaching the health MDGs.
- ! Worldwide a child dies every three seconds, a mother dies in pregnancy or childbirth every minute and 7,000 people are infected with HIV AIDS every day.
- ! More than half a million women die from preventable complications in pregnancy and childbirth every year. Over 300 million suffer from preventable illness and disability.
- ! Current donor funding is not sufficiently predictable or sufficiently large to support reaching the health MDGs.

The Taskforce recognises that the challenges facing the international community in terms of improving people's health in developing countries is not just one of funding; it is also an organisational and efficiency challenge. It is vital these concerns are met proactively by the members of the Taskforce. The issues and concerns of the Taskforce are not localised to the regions of the globe which are the poorest. If health systems collapse and poverty increases nations will be ill-equipped to build proper infrastructure. Economies are built by the healthy not the weak and dying, the vulnerable must be cared for to allow them to care for their nations. If sound health systems are not implemented fast and funding is not secured, poverty will increase and the demands placed on the wealthy nations of the world will become extreme.

For more information on the Taskforce and interviews with spokespeople:
colleen@harrisprivate.com or call +44(0)7802 296 737 or +44(0)20 7223 4512
www.internationalhealthpartnership.net/taskforce.html

-ENDS-

About the Taskforce

The Taskforce will:

1. Make recommendations on the mix of innovative international financing mechanisms needed to deliver the extra resources required;
2. Promote international support for these recommendations to ensure they are implemented.



The Taskforce on Innovative International Financing for Health Systems

Taskforce members:

1. Prime Minister Gordon Brown (United Kingdom) (co-chair)
2. Robert Zoellick (President of the World Bank) (co-chair)
3. President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf (Liberia)
4. Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg (Norway)
5. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus (Health Minister, Ethiopia)
6. Bernard Kouchner (Foreign Minister, France)
7. Giulio Tremonti (Finance Minister, Italy)
8. Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul (UNSG Special Envoy for Finance for Development Conference & Development Minister, Germany)
9. Stephen Smith (Foreign Affairs Minister, Australia)
10. Margaret Chan (Director-General of the World Health Organization)
11. Graça Machel (President and Founder, Foundation for Community Development, Mozambique)

Phillippe Douste-Blazy the UN Secretary-General Special Envoy on Innovative Financing serves as Special Envoy to the Taskforce

For more information on the work of the Taskforce please visit
www.internationalhealthpartnership.net/taskforce.html