



Sustainable Health Financing

Tuesday, 27 May 2008
14:00-15:30
International Conference Centre Geneva
Room 2

Globally, great improvements in health have been observed over the last few decades, as evidenced by increased life expectancy and reduced child mortality in the vast majority of countries.

Such improvements can be attributed partly to increased living standards, improvements in the availability of environmental facilities such as water and sanitation, and more recently, to advances in medical technologies and services.

But recently there have also been some notable and significant reverses. For example, average life expectancy in a worrying number of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa has actually declined since 1990, and for example, adult male mortality rates have increased in parts of the former Soviet Union including Russia.

In all regions of the world, non-communicable diseases are becoming increasingly important, leaving poor countries with the double burden of financing high burdens of infectious diseases while at the same time tackling the escalating toll of cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and road traffic injuries. Now that treatment is substantially prolonging life, the 'lifestyle' -related non-communicable diseases, plus HIV, require relatively expensive, long-term care, increasing the need to find more resources for health.

More resources and long-term reliable financing strategies have to be adopted. From an economic perspective, all health financing models share three key functions:

1. Revenue collection (i.e. mechanisms to collect financial means to cover the expenses related to the provision of health services – ideally to improve health)
2. Pooling (i.e. how contributions are pooled together so that the risk of having to pay for health care is not borne by a single contributor – so called risk-sharing and its roots in the solidarity concept amongst the member of a community avoiding catastrophic losses for individual households)
3. Purchasing/Provision (i.e. how money is spent to purchase and/or provide health services – how financial resources are allocated to different type of health services to be provided)

This proposed session aims at fostering an exchange and debate among the panellists on the capacity of current models/policies to raise sufficient financial means to guarantee access for populations and to make appropriate choices to deliver needed/demanded health services.

Different country perspectives and views from different global actors will be covered.