



WHO VALIDATES ELIMINATION OF MOTHER-TO-CHILD TRANSMISSION OF HIV AND SYPHILIS IN CUBA

30 JUNE 2015 | GENEVA | WASHINGTON - Cuba today became the first country in the world to receive validation from WHO that it has eliminated mother-to-child transmission of HIV and syphilis.

“Accurate and timely health data are the foundation to improving public health. Without reliable information to set priorities and measure results, countries and their development partners are working in the dark,” said Margaret Chan, Director-General of WHO. “Investing in measurement is an investment in health and countries that build and strengthen local capacity are better positioned to achieve greater long-term success and better health outcomes.

Dozens of global health leaders from governments, multilaterals, academia, research institutions and civil society will endorse The Roadmap for Health Measurement and Accountability and a 5-Point Call to Action, which outline a shared strategic approach and priority actions and targets that countries and development partners can use to put effective health monitoring plans in place to strengthen health information systems.

“If we are going to ensure that people everywhere have access to quality health care, and that no one is impoverished paying for the health care they need, we need to invest in high-quality, timely, and accurate data and statistics so that countries can measure and monitor their progress,” said Jim Yong Kim, President of the World Bank Group. “Today’s investments in country health information systems will lead to a better tomorrow for billions of people.”

Supporting countries to achieve their health-related Sustainable Development Goals over the next 15 years and aligning partner and donors around common priorities are at the center of the Roadmap and 5-Point Call to Action.

“With the end of the Millennium Development Goals and advent of the Sustainable Development Goals, we are at a key moment to shape the future of international development—and that includes improving health,” said Alfonso Lenhardt, Acting Administrator of USAID. “Countries need to build and further strengthen their capacity in health so they can meet the growing demands for reliable and timely data required for effective measurement of health programs.”

The Roadmap outlines smart investments and proposes concrete actions and targets that countries can adopt to build local capacities, including strengthening basic measurement systems essential to successfully planning, managing and measuring their health programs. The 5-Point Call to Action provides concrete targets for increasing investments, strengthening institutional capacity, using data more effectively, sharing and standardizing data openly, and promoting accountability and transparency.

Panelists at the summit will represent a broad array of high-level global health leaders, country representatives and development partners, and will discuss issues related to building country capacity and demand for health data, including topics such as data revolution and the importance of country and global accountability.

Available from: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2015/mtct-hiv-cuba/en/>

NEW REPORT SHOWS THAT 400 MILLION DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL HEALTH SERVICES

12 JUNE 2015 | GENEVA | NEW YORK CITY - A WHO and World Bank Group report launched today shows that 400 million people do not have access to essential health services and 6% of people in low- and middle-income countries are tipped into or pushed further into extreme poverty because of health spending.

“This report is a wakeup call: It shows that we’re a long way from achieving universal health coverage. We must expand access to health and protect the poorest from health expenses that are causing them severe financial hardship,” says Dr Tim Evans, Senior Director of Health, Nutrition and Population at the World Bank Group.

Tracking universal health coverage: First global monitoring report

The report, *Tracking Universal Health Coverage*, is the first of its kind to measure health service coverage and financial protection to assess countries’ progress towards universal health coverage.

The report looked at global access to essential health services - including family planning, antenatal care, skilled birth attendance, child immunization, antiretroviral therapy, tuberculosis treatment, and access to clean water and sanitation - in 2013, and found that at least 400 million people lacked access to at least one of these services.

“The world’s most disadvantaged people are missing out on even the most basic services,” says Dr Marie-Paule Kieny, Assistant Director-General, Health Systems and Innovation, at the World Health Organization. “A commitment to equity is at the heart of universal health coverage. Health policies and programmes should focus on providing quality health services for the poorest people, women and children, people living in rural areas and those from minority groups”.

The report also found that, across 37 countries, 6% of the population was tipped or pushed further into extreme poverty (\$1.25/day) because they had to pay for health services out of their own pockets. When the study factored in a poverty measure of \$2/day, 17% of people in these countries were impoverished, or further impoverished, by health expenses.

“These high levels of impoverishment, which happen when poor people have to pay out of pocket for their own emergency health care, pose a major threat to the goal of eliminating extreme poverty,” says Dr Kaushik Basu, Senior Vice President and Chief Economist at the World Bank Group. “As we transition to a post-2015 development era, we must act on these findings, or the world’s poor risk being left behind.”