

## **M8 Alliance Declaration World Health Summit 2017**

### **Health is a political choice**

**Global health is increasingly shaped in the political arena. For the first time the heads of state of the G20 included priority global health issues in their final declaration. Health is recognized as a central piece of the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 and it is now a regular feature at the UN General Assembly. Many regional political bodies are engaging to improve health whilst city initiatives for health are gaining in relevance. The member states of the WHO have elected a new Director General with a strong commitment to the right of all people to Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and to gender equity. At the same time global solidarity for health is challenged by a wave of populism. This year's World Health Summit (WHS) sends a strong message that determined political leadership is required to counteract forces that endanger global health progress.**

**The rich discussions at the World Health Summit 2017 lead us to highlight the need for action in six key areas of global health:**

#### **1. Commitment to Strong and Reliable Governance**

The world needs strong global health institutions to set norms and standards, respond to outbreaks and to protect and support the most vulnerable. Their work needs the support of decision makers at the highest level and it is essential that health remains a key issue in major political fora such as the G7 and the G20 and in all regional organizations. Topics such as health security, antimicrobial resistance and the health impact of climate change, "One Health", "Health in all Policies" reach far beyond the health sector and need the involvement of heads of government and other stakeholders. Interdisciplinary collaboration is the critical factor - all stakeholders from academia, the private sector, civil society and politics have to work together. Governments have to coordinate their activities, support international cooperation and strengthen the World Health Organization (WHO). The Sustainable Development Goals have provided the road map for action.

The M8 Alliance calls on the countries hosting the next G7 and G20 summits and holding the presidencies of key regional organizations to include global health challenges on their agendas and to make the political choices required to ensure the implementation of the 2030 SDG agenda.

## **2. Commitment to Ensure Global Health Security**

The world is not yet ready to respond sufficiently to a major pandemic threat, despite a range of new initiatives which have been created to support greater health security for all. The joint global effort to implement the International Health Regulations (IHR) must continue with vigor and strong financial support – from both donor and domestic resources. Investments in science and innovation as well as in public health institutions and capacity are critical. This requires synergies between national, regional and global action, between public and private actors and between development and humanitarian organizations.

The M8 Alliance calls on decision makers to maintain and strengthen their investment in health security, especially the implementation of the IHR. This must include ensuring the safety of health and humanitarian workers in war and conflict zones. Investing in resilient health systems and capacity at community level is one of the best approaches to ensure greater safety and reduce vulnerability.

## **3. Commitment to Healthy and Resilient Cities**

Cities are becoming transformative drivers of sustainable development and key actors in global health. Their challenge is to act for health locally and integrate health into urban planning, housing investment and social policy decisions as cities continue to grow and change. Urban populations face many health risks, among them pollution, noise, overcrowding, traffic, insufficient access to drinking water and sanitary facilities, crime, and infectious disease. The NCD pandemic will only be resolved if there is also determined action at the city level.

The M8 Alliance welcomes the increasing number of city initiatives and networks that support health and calls on Mayors to give particular attention to the social determinants of health and their impact on the next generation of children and young people.

## **4. Commitment to Responsible Approaches to Big Data**

Data are increasingly a cornerstone of the healthcare in all sectors including industry and its value is rising exponentially. It documents everything from blood pressure readings, wearables, sensors and treatment outcomes, surgical records to insurance claims, immunization histories, patient demographics and receipts of payment. Big Data and artificial intelligence can bridge the gap between healthcare delivery and population health and improve many health outcomes through enhanced methods of research. The digital future of health has only just begun and in many cases outpaces the policy responses.

The M8 Alliance calls on international organizations and on policy makers to prioritize the digital potential of health systems and to rapidly and systematically address the ethical, commercial, regulatory and technical challenges that come with this change.

## **5. Commitment to Research, Innovation and Development**

Progress in global health is driven by great scientific progress and innovation in health research. Investing in basic research, science and technology is a game changer in all areas – In global health the development of vaccines offers the best means for controlling, eliminating and eradicating dangerous communicable pathogens. Intensified global efforts to step up vaccine research and development are therefore essential and a range of new initiatives – such as GAVI and CEPI – support the move in this direction. Important initiatives are also emerging to address the challenge of antimicrobial resistance. Part of such an effort must be the support to institution and capacity building in the global South and strong cooperation networks that span the globe. The support of digitalization is a key component of any such strategy.

The M8 Alliance calls on countries, private sector actors and international organizations to significantly step up their investment in innovation, science and technology, including implementation sciences, interdisciplinary and translational work as well as technology transfer.

## **6. Commitment to Innovation and Health Systems Strengthening in Africa**

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals will require significant innovations regarding how investments and partnerships are developed with low and middle income countries around the world, especially in Africa. This includes information sharing and knowledge exchange. A new generation of well-trained scientists and health professionals stands ready to contribute if there are institutions within which they can work and serve. Domestic investment will play an ever more important role – yet cooperation among African countries as in other regions of the world will be more important than ever before in order to muster the still scarce resources.

The M8 Alliance calls on professional organizations to actively contribute to new models of institution building and professional development to promote indigenous capacity in science and technology. Strategies to develop a highly competent health workforce, managing work force migration and circulation, involvement of Diasporas of professionals and scientists will gain in relevance. First successes in Africa show that progress is possible – they must be stepped up and supported.

**The M8 Alliance renews its full commitment to support goal 3 of the Sustainable Development Goals which aims to: “Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages.” We call on heads of state and government to invest in people and to ensure that no one is left behind.**

**The M8 Alliance commits to the transformative approach of the Sustainable Development Goals. Success in SDG goal 3 will be achieved in a cross sectoral approach involving many of the other SDGs. We call on politicians to make the political choice for health.**



### **World Health Summit:**

The World Health Summit is one of the world's most prominent strategic forums for global health. The interdisciplinary event takes place within an atmosphere of academic freedom and is the premiere international platform for exploring strategic developments and decisions in the area of healthcare.

Every October, internationally renowned leaders and representatives from the sciences, politics, business, and civil society travel to Berlin for the World Health Summit to discuss the latest challenges facing medical research and healthcare. The World Health Summit enjoys the high patronage of German Chancellor Angela Merkel, the President of the French Republic Emmanuel Macron and European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker

### **M8 Alliance:**

The M8 Alliance of Academic Health Centers, Universities and National Academies is a unique collaborative network and think tank, made up of leading international medical universities, research institutions and all National Academies of medicine and science, the InterAcademy Partnership (IAP). The M8 Alliance was founded in 2009 at the inaugural World Health Summit, and has provided an outstanding academic foundation ever since.

The M8 Alliance currently has 25 members based in 18 different countries, all of which are committed to improving global health and working with political and economic decision-makers to develop science-based solutions to health challenges worldwide. The M8 Alliance promotes the translation of research from bench to bedside to population health, as well as the transformation of current medical care approaches to treating the ill by creating healthcare systems aimed at the effective prevention of disease at the global level.