

M8 Alliance Statement

World Health Summit 2015—We Must Act on Global Health

A defining year for global health

The World Health Summit (WHS) 2015 took place in a defining year for global health: The world has set an ambitious agenda in relation to poverty, development, climate, and the health and well-being of all people—at the same time new challenges that require determined political action have emerged.

Our actions today will define the future of people and planet. The Ebola outbreak, the global migration and refugee movements, the experience of war and insecurity for many people, and the health impact of the financial crisis have put health firmly on the global political agenda. Many of the recent health crises are the result of a lack of commitment, weak governance, and insufficient investments in health systems and social determinants of health. Academia, politics, civil society and the private sector all have to assume more responsibility and act.

In the spirit of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the WHS 2015 calls on world leaders to take bold action for global health.

We, the members of the M8 Alliance, call for action in five key areas of global health following from the discussion at the 2015 World Health Summit:

1. The health of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons
2. Global health security, sustainability and solidarity
3. Universal health coverage
4. Climate change and health
5. Digital health

1. The right to health of refugees and other forcibly displaced people

We consider refugee health a neglected area of global health action and funding that must be addressed more forcefully in cooperation with refugee agencies and the humanitarian sector.

Refugee and migrant health has entered public and political awareness in donor countries with the European "migrant crisis." But we would do well to remember that by the end of 2014 there were 19.5 million refugees throughout the world, many of them living in dire conditions in camps and refugee shelters in developing countries. 59.5 million people are currently forcibly displaced worldwide. While refugees face immediate health problems, it is especially the long-term mental health and well-being of these millions of men, women, and children that requires determined action.

Call for action: The M8 Alliance appeals to all parties involved that refugees should have access to health services equivalent to that of the host population. Everyone has the right under international law to the highest standards of physical and mental health. Refugee policies must prioritize the most important determinant of long-term well-being: the integration of refugees into the new country's health and social system.

2. The right of all people to health security, sustainability and solidarity

We are deeply concerned by the ongoing challenges the world faces in the area of global health security and we underline the need to better ensure global disease outbreak preparedness and response, cooperation in humanitarian crisis, and security for health institutions and staff in conflict zones.

In the context of the increased cross-border movement of people, products, and infectious microbes, countries must join forces to make the world a safer place and to ensure the health security of the poorest and of migrants and refugees. It is an unacceptable affront to the Geneva Conventions that hospitals in conflict zones can no longer be considered protected spaces. During this year, the G7 under the German presidency gave strong political support to the global health agenda—in particular the need to address neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) and antimicrobial resistance (AMR) as well as to ensure that the world is better prepared for outbreaks in the wake of the Ebola crisis.

Call for action: The M8 Alliance calls on all countries and development partners to invest with determination in education, research, infrastructure, and specifically diagnostics and treatment of neglected tropical diseases and—following the Ebola crisis—to ensure the full implementation of the International Health Regulations by investing in country-based preparedness and response and the establishment of a reliable global response system. We further call for determined action on implementing the One Health approach to fight antimicrobial resistance AMR.

3. The right of all people to universal health coverage

We emphasize that investment in health is key to sustainable development and fully commit to support goal 3, which aims to: "Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages." We agree with Director General Margaret Chan of the WHO that "Universal health coverage (UHC) is the single most powerful concept that public health has to offer."

Just two weeks before, the Sustainable Development Goals were adopted at the United Nations General Assembly and set a new vision for cooperation between nations. The world's leading economists have argued that expanding investments in health will be key to achieving sustainable development. The WHS discussed many of the issues integral to this goal including the rise of non-communicable diseases and the need for a high-quality workforce.

Call for action: The M8 Alliance calls on all development partners and countries to significantly accelerate their investment in UHC, including the access to medicines and the development of the global health workforce. The commitment to work jointly between

public and private partners and with full inclusion of communities and patients toward achieving high-quality universal health coverage is a priority.

4. The right of all people to a healthy planet

We emphasize that the health of the planet and of people are inextricably linked and that it is critical to apply a human-rights-based approach to guide global policies and measures designed to address climate change. Tackling climate change could be the greatest global health opportunity of the 21st century.

In December 2015, countries will negotiate a new COP21 global climate agreement. We are concerned that the negative impacts of climate change are disproportionately borne by persons and communities already in disadvantageous situations that have historically contributed the least to greenhouse gas emissions. We reinforce that safeguarding health cannot be addressed separately from the natural systems on which it depends; strong intersectoral action is required.

Call for action: The M8 Alliance urges a strong climate agreement and bold collective action at a global, national, and local level on the health impact of climate change. The WHS calls on all countries and development partners—global, national, and local—to address climate change and sustainable production and consumption. In particular, it calls on health organizations to take on a leadership role in the movement toward a low-carbon economy and healthy climate.

5. The digital health rights of citizens

We call for an intensified dialogue on the potential of digital health—ranging from wearable sensors and portable diagnostic technologies to telemedicine tools and mobile health care apps—for individuals and society. Concerns grow about the privacy and security of peoples' data. We believe that clear policies and standards can help build public trust as the use of big data, electronic health records, the electronic sharing of health information, and health information technology increase.

A new world of health care is emerging—there are significant opportunities for the introduction of new technologies into clinical practice so as to enhance quality of care as well as personalize and measure outcomes and expanding points of care. Such technologies, including health apps and data sharing, can empower consumers and let them participate more in prevention and care, but this requires an investment in high levels of health literacy of patients and users.

Call for action: The M8 Alliance calls for an approach to digital health that works toward achieving the vision of the triple aim: improving population health, improving care experiences, and reducing per-capita costs of care. As digital health becomes a powerful driver in health, it is important that policy makers and legislators ensure the safety of the devices, the rights of consumers to the privacy of their data, and the equal access of patients to such innovation.



General Information

The World Health Summit

The World Health Summit (WHS) is one of the world's most prominent forums for issues involving health care. The interdisciplinary, international event takes place in an atmosphere of academic freedom.

Every October, internationally renowned leaders and representatives from the sciences, politics, business, and civil society travel to Berlin for the WHS to discuss the latest challenges facing medical research and health care. Under the high patronage of German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President François Hollande and European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, the Summit is the premiere international platform for exploring strategic developments and decisions in the area of health care.

The World Health Summit's academic think tank is provided by the M8 Alliance, a unique collaborative network made up of leading international medical universities, research institutions, and the Interacademy Medical Panel (IAMP)—representing National Academies from 67 countries. The World Health Summit also organizes the Regional Meeting that takes place each April in the country of the acting President.

The M8 Alliance

The M8 Alliance of Academic Health Centers, Universities and National Academies is a collaborative network of academic institutions known for its educational and research excellence. The network was founded in 2009 at the inaugural World Health Summit, and has provided an outstanding academic foundation to every WHS event since.

The M8 Alliance currently has 21 members based in 16 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 bench to bedside to population health translation of research, as well as the transformation of current medical care approaches to treating the ill by creating health care systems aimed at the effective prevention of disease. The organization also works to adapt health-related solutions to rapidly changing living conditions through research in priority areas, especially shifting demographics, urbanization, and climate change.