

General Comment on the Global Action Plan
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While it is clear that the collaboration of international organizations engaged in global health is not able to develop a roadmap in terms of achieving SDG 3 without the cooperation of UN member states, the global action plan should be understood as a first fundamental step of this process. The original proposal submitted to World Health Organization by the governments of Ghana, Germany and Norway regarding one joint plan to “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all” points to the same direction. This perspective should be reflected in the general approach and the defined actions of the present global plan.

Likewise, the participating organizations should not restrict their perspective and scope of action on country-level efforts, but formulate concise measures to consequently use their potential for convening all stakeholders under the auspices of shared responsibility and international solidarity. A cornerstone should represent the promotion of appropriate commitments and measures taken by economically privileged nations to support and enable better health services and outcomes in the more disadvantaged countries and populations. This cooperative approach comprehends both providing financial contributions to bridge the remaining huge resource gaps especially in LICs and taking all necessary measures to eliminate global or regional detrimental health impacts resulting from their own economic and political practices. Consequently, we need to transition to a novel and audacious way of thinking and acting in the SDG era that establishes clear policies with respect to the required redistribution of resources and capabilities as well as standards to reverse the destructive effects of the dominating economic system, which range from climate change and loss of biodiversity to social polarization and political authoritarianism. With their intensified collaboration the specialized organizations should initiate systematic efforts to produce the scientific analysis and political advocacy that lay the basis for this endeavor. Only then, we will be able to create the necessary conditions to overcome the myriad of severe health risks and forces of exclusion from life-saving services, thus achieving that the gaps of survival chances will narrow instead of widen again, which would make a mockery of the principle to leave no one behind.

Furthermore, there are many distinct and important tasks that the partnering organizations should perceive as elements of their genuine mandate and address through this global approach. First, systematic and objective progress reviews of the implementation of international agreements help to create the incentives or, in a considerable number of cases, the pressure that spur more adequate actions by politically responsible decision-makers, government officials and other players. Second, the independent collection and comparative assessment of health-relevant data, based on sound scientific criteria and rooted in human rights, contribute to identify the most urgent health needs and understand the causes of health threats, instead of simply relying on stated priorities, as well as to allocate technical and financial resources in a more purposeful and effective manner. Third, joint actions beyond the health field are necessary in order to promote and enable government efforts to increase public revenue and invest the additional resources in essential measures of human development, especially by avoiding destructive competition and resisting influential economic powers that intend to impose low-taxation policies. Fourth, so-called intellectual property rights enacted increasingly in trade agreements, in particular patent provisions and data exclusivity, exacerbate the orientation of the research done by private companies towards lucrative demand and lead to further monopolization of its results, which calls not only for thorough scientific evaluation and consequent political debate of these highly problematic tendencies, but also evidences the necessity to promote coordinated efforts aiming to strengthen research and development of health technologies that are publicly funded and primarily directed towards the needs of economically disadvantaged countries with high disease burdens as well as vulnerable populations.