



Health is a fundamental human right, a moral and social imperative, and the basis of equitable growth and sustainable development

Newsletter

Issue 25, May 2015

Health News

The vital role of health workers

Without adequate numbers of health workers, especially in rural areas, more than half of the world's rural population – and more than three-quarters of the rural population in Africa – will go without access to effective health care. This is one of the distressing findings of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in its new study, [Global Evidence on Inequities in Rural Health Protection](#). *The study* was part of the ILO's response to observable trends in economic dis-investment and neglect in rural health systems around the world. Now, with this report indicating that nearly 56% of the world's rural population – and 83% of Africa's rural population – live without critical healthcare access, the ILO has provided powerful evidence to demonstrate why strengthening the rural health workforce is imperative.

International Center on Nurse Migration launches new website

The International Center on Nurse Migration (ICNM) today launched its new [website](#). The ICNM was created by CGFNS International (CGFNS) and the International Council of Nurses (ICN) as a global resource for the development, promotion and dissemination of research, policy and information on nurse migration.

The Global Drug Facility

The Global Drug Facility (GDF) of the Stop TB Partnership was established in 2001, with the aim of using donor funding to consolidate demand and negotiate affordable prices for quality-assured anti-TB drugs. Today, as one of the main players in the complex global market for TB drugs, the GDF plays a crucial role not only in shaping drug supply, but also in reducing the price of medicines. A new [report](#) from Stop TB explains how the GDF works.

New guidelines from the WHO [Department of HIV/AIDS](#)

Consolidated strategic information guidelines for HIV in the health sector were launched on 11 May 2015 in Bangkok, Thailand. These are a result of WHO collaboration with several partners: the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, UNAIDS, UNICEF and the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. See [here](#) for the guidelines and [here](#) for the full statement.

Analysis of Ebola epidemic and a strategic vision for reform

The Ebola virus disease outbreak in West Africa was pivotal for the worldwide health system. Just as the depth of the crisis ultimately spurred an unprecedented response, the failures of leadership suggest the need for innovative reforms. Such reforms would transform the existing worldwide health system architecture into a purposeful, organised system with an empowered, highly capable WHO at its apex and enduring, equitable national health systems at its foundation. Read this interesting Lancet article [here](#).

Are key development efforts striking the right public-private balance?

Getting the right balance between public and private sector roles and responsibilities in the Financing for Development and Post-2015 process will be fundamental to prospects for sustainable, inclusive development. Yet early evidence suggests this balance is already skewed in favour of private interests, says this [Global Policy Watch briefing](#). “There’s no question that businesses around the world are sources of growth and employment. But they are also the source of the most serious threats to sustainable development—from pollution to illicit financial flows that undermine prospects for public resources... Can we have a transformative development agenda without the transformation of business?”

Universal Health Coverage: lessons learnt in Egypt, Ghana and India

Significant advances towards Universal Health Coverage (UHC) in a number of low and middle income countries have fostered an enthusiasm for UHC amongst governments and civil society organisations (CSOs). Nevertheless progress remains fragile. See this [report](#) of an Oxfam programme in these three countries.

Effective responses to HIV and AIDS at work: a multi-country study in Africa

This [new ILO study](#) identifies factors that contribute to effective workplace programmes on HIV and AIDS, including their impact on reducing risky behaviours; reducing stigma and discrimination; and promoting the uptake of services such as voluntary counselling and testing. It provides a comprehensive assessment of HIV and AIDS workplace initiatives across 10 African countries: Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Senegal, South Africa and Zambia.

Global malnutrition information and action

The *Global nutrition report*, published by the International Food Policy Research Institute, addresses the issue of global malnutrition. It aims to track progress in improving nutrition and, at the same time, identifies actions to accelerate progress and strengthen accountability. See [here](#) for new ways of thinking about nutrition, feeding into plans, strategies and decisions, and adding support to evidence-based campaigns.

Nestle Chairman and board exposed by IBFAN at shareholder meeting

Members of the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) stood up at Nestlé’s annual meeting on 16 April [to call on Nestlé Chairman Peter Brabeck-Letmathé](#) to change policies that promote breast milk substitutes and endanger health. Children fed on formula are more likely to become sick than breastfed babies, especially in conditions of poverty.

Mr Brabeck refused to stop promoting formula, despite further documentary evidence of deaths of babies fed on formula in a 2014 report from the Bangladesh Paediatric Association.

WHO HIV and Hepatitis update

The latest [newsletter](#) with information on initiatives by the WHO Department of HIV/AIDS and the Global Hepatitis Programme is now available

Affordable Care Act, USA

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) will add more than a quarter of a trillion dollars to the already very high administrative costs of U.S. health care through 2022, according to a [study](#) published Wednesday by the *Health Affairs* blog.

Drawing on the National Health Expenditure Projections for 2012-2022, released in July 2014 by the Office of the Actuary at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the authors calculated yearly estimates for private insurance overhead and government program administration costs both with and without the effects of the ACA.

Chrysotile asbestos producing countries seek to block safety requirements in UN Convention

At the Rotterdam Convention conference which recently took place in Geneva, country after country called for chrysotile asbestos to be put on the Convention's list of hazardous substances, as recommended by the Convention's scientific body. However the move was blocked by a handful of countries – Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, India, Cuba and Zimbabwe. This is the fifth time that the UN has recommended the inclusion of deadly Chrysotile asbestos, and each time their efforts have been frustrated by the chrysotile asbestos producing nations. Read more [here](#).

Mental Health

Dementia and risk reduction

The [World Alzheimer Report 2014](#) critically examines the evidence for the existence of modifiable risk factors for dementia. It focuses on sets of risk factors in four key domains: developmental, psychological and psychosocial, lifestyle and cardiovascular conditions. The report makes recommendations to drive public health campaigns and disease prevention strategies. See [here](#) for the executive summary.

Announcements

Falling between the cracks: abuse and violence against older women

Human Rights Council 29th session side event to mark World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

Monday 15 June 2015 12.00 – 14.00, Conference Room XXV Palais des Nations

Cross-border healthcare in Europe: promoting equal access to quality care

This international symposium provides a platform for constructive debate on the current state of the Cross-Border Healthcare Directive's implementation throughout Europe as well as on the necessary actions that need to be taken to reduce health inequalities and facilitate access to better and safer care in the EU.

Wednesday 1 July 2015 at Thon Hotel, Brussels City Centre – [event details](#)

Mental Health and Psychological Support in Humanitarian Action

A panel discussion will be hosted by the IASC Secretariat together with the World Humanitarian Summit. The IASC (Inter-Agency Standing Committee) is the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination of humanitarian assistance.

Wednesday 3 June, 10:30-12:00, Room S4, Palais des Nations, Geneva

CUTS Geneva launches information hub for negotiators and policymakers on services

Trade in services can play a central role in promoting sustainable development, supporting inclusive economic growth, and reducing poverty in modern economies. However LDCs, LICs, and LMICs continue to face challenges in catalysing and/or sustaining progress across this diverse range of economic activities.

With support from the UK Trade Advocacy Fund, CUTS International Geneva, ILEAP and the University of Sussex's CARIS have partnered to set up [an information hub](#) and offer studies, toolkits and training to assist stakeholders increase and improve their participation in multilateral, regional and bilateral services trade negotiations.

International diploma in mental health, human rights and law

Applications for the academic year 2015-16 are currently being accepted for the diploma, a collaboration between WHO and the ILS Law College in Pune, India, and now in its eighth year. The one-year course builds the capacity of students to advocate for human rights and to influence national legislative and policy in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other key international human rights standards. It includes two residential sessions and distance learning.

Students to date have comprised health and mental health professionals, lawyers, mental health service users/survivors, government officials, social workers, human rights defenders and families and carers. More information about the Diploma is available [here](#) and the prospectus and application form [here](#).

The Forum Newsletter aims to provide information to members and cooperating organisations and serve as a platform for sharing updates, ideas and experiences. Please send us material you want to share at: info@ngo-forum-health.ch

Visit our website at: <http://ngo-forum-health.ch/>