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THE 2030 AGENDA: HEALTH AS AN OVERARCHING AIM OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Introduction

At the landmark Sustainable Development Summit, held in New York, 25-27 September 2015, the historic new agenda, entitled “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” was officially adopted. Agreed by the 193 Member States of the UN, the new agenda consists of a Declaration, 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets.

The 2030 Agenda is the product of the largest consultative process in the history of the United Nations, led by Member States and including broad participation by stakeholders such as civil-society organizations, the private sector and academia. The United Nations (UN) facilitated this global conversation. The Governing Bodies of the World Health Organization followed the process, evaluated progress, and participated actively in this new cycle of global commitment to sustainable development, including the Global Thematic Consultations, and especially the one on health held in Botswana (2012).

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The 2030 Agenda integrates all three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental), representing a major shift from multiple fragmented parallel processes to a single comprehensive and universal agenda for the people, planet and prosperity, grounded in peace, inclusiveness, strong governance, and global partnership. It also recognizes that so many of the development goals impact one another and are interrelated, interdependent, as a network with explicit links among goals through targets which will facilitate cross-sector integration, policy coherence and whole of government, whole of society approach.

European Region of the World Health Organization (WHO) has welcome global health agenda prepared. The H2020, European policy for health and wellbeing, fully aligned with the 2030 Agenda, has been paving the way towards better health income for three years already, securing safe trip towards achieving the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

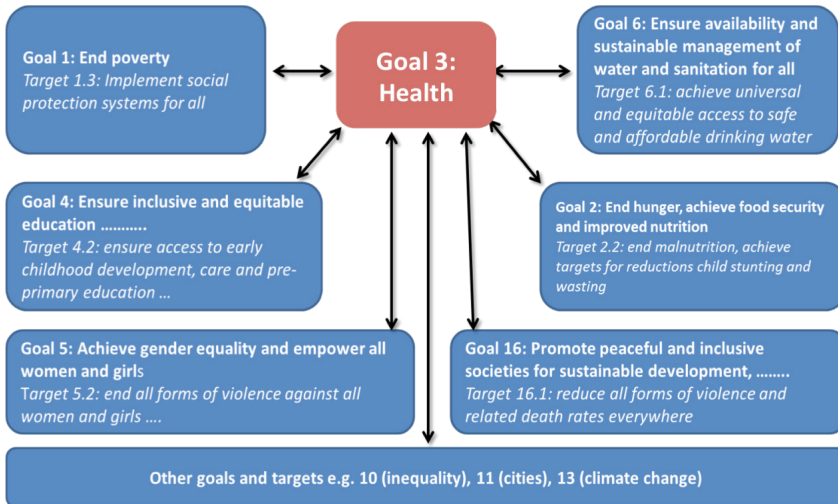
Health in the 2030 Agenda: an overarching aim of the sustainable development

The countries of the European Region of WHO, including Macedonia, have been important advocates of health and its central role in the new development agenda throughout the negotiations process. Following the launch of the 2030 Agenda, the countries have to prepare for the “localization” of the agenda at the country level and its integration with national development planning adapting national targets.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognize that eradicating poverty and inequality, creating inclusive economic growth and preserving the planet are inextricably linked, not only to each other but also to population health; and that the relationships between each of these elements are dynamic and reciprocal.

Health has got its own SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages, profiles health as a desirable outcome in its own right. Importantly, however, health is also presented as an input to other goals, and a reliable measure of how well sustainable development is progressing in general.

Figure 1. Global needs - SDG 3: Health Goal and linkage to other SDGs

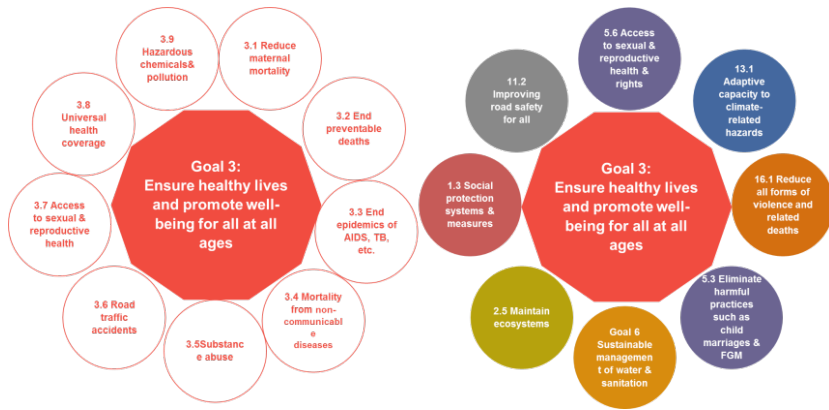


The health targets include the “unfinished business” of the MDG era, as well as addressing a major shift in health patterns that accelerated during the MDG period. They embrace bold new goals for turning the tide on non-communicable diseases. They also specifically address the determinants of health; economic, social and environmental such as poverty, increasing urbanization, pollution and climate change.

Important health issues included as targets in SDG 3 include sexual and reproductive health and rights, mental health, substance abuse, and the implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. An additional target addresses reducing and managing national and global health risks, for example, from contagious diseases.

Universal health coverage (UHC) is the only target that cuts across all of the health goals, addressing linkages with health-related targets in the other goals. Moving towards UHC requires strong, efficient health systems that can respond to the full range of health determinants, with renewed efforts to implement people-centered solutions while remaining resilient to economic downturns.

Figure 2. Health as a goal, Health as a target...



The World Health Organisation as technical organisation, enabler and advocate for health as contributor to economic growth and social development is fully engaged in collaborating with countries and partners to meet those targets, putting its emphasis on reducing health inequalities and promoting equity and social inclusion that leaves no one behind. Both H2020 and the 2030 Agenda cross-fertilize: H2020 provides for an elaborated vehicle towards achieving SDGs, and the 2030 Agenda, and 2030 Agenda, provides for H2020 sustainability, after 2020-enriched and adopted as appropriate to serve the needs of the population in the European Region of WHO, extended until 2030.

BOX 1. SDG3: Health goal and targets

Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

- 3.1 Reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births
- 3.2 End preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age
- 3.3 End the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases
- 3.4 Reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being

- 3.5 Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse
- 3.6 Halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents
- 3.7 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services
- 3.8 Achieve universal health coverage
- 3.9 Substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination
- 3.a Strengthen the implementation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control
- 3.b Support the research and development of vaccines and medicines for communicable and noncommunicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries and provide access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines, in accordance with the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health
- 3.c Substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries
- 3.d Strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks

(Source: *Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*)

The new global health agenda has once again emphasised the need and importance of wider and overarching policy frameworks for health, to serve as guidance, an inspiration and a knowledge directory towards better global health outcomes. In addition, health has been clearly recognised as an investment towards sustainable development.

Table 1. Health as an overarching outcome of the SDGs: health-related targets

SDG 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere	
Targets	1.3 Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all 1.5 Build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other shocks and disasters
SDG 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture	
Targets	2.1 End hunger and ensure access by all people to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round 2.2 End all forms of malnutrition
SDG 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all	
Targets	4.5 Eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities 4.a Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, nonviolent, inclusive and effective learning environments
SDG 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	
Targets	5.2. Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres 5.3. Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation 5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights
SDG 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all	
Targets	6.1. Achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all 6.2. Achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation
SDG 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all	
	7.1 Ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services
SDG 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all	
	8.5 Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities 8.7 Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour 8.8 Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers

SDG 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries	
	<p>10.2 Empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status</p> <p>10.7 Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies</p>
SDG 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable	
	<p>11.1 Ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums</p> <p>11.2 Provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety</p> <p>11.5 Significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters</p> <p>11.7 Provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces</p> <p>11.b Substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement holistic disaster risk management</p>
SDG 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns	
	<p>12.4 By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil</p>
SDG 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*	
	<p>13.3 Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning</p>
SDG 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels	
	<p>16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children</p> <p>16.9 Provide legal identity for all, including birth registration</p>
SDG 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development	
	<p>17.18 By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts</p>

(Source: Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development)

Efforts of 2030 Agenda and health on national level

In the preamble of the draft-National health policy “Together for Health for All”, the 2030 Agenda and its orientation towards sustainable development have been recognized as commitment of the Government, emphasizing the right of the citizen to healthcare and to the promotion of his or her health and the health of others, embedded in the Constitution; underlining the importance of healthy population as a prerequisite for sustainable human development and increased productivity; and health as an important goal and an integral part of human well-being. The national health policy “Together for Health for All”, prepared during the period 2014-2015 through engagement of all sectors using different tools and modalities for providing outreach and ownership, has strong commitment to improving health and wellbeing across all dimensions of the society, and inevitably through engagement and motivation of other sectors within a framework of fundamental government responsibility for health and well-being and employing intersectoral action in strategic and sustainable manner, addressing all determinants of health that stretch across the whole of society.

Figure 3. Together for Health for All envisions delivering on the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda



The policy takes into consideration complex global and European contexts: the ratified international treaties, and especially those related to human rights as well as the country's membership of international organizations, and especially the World Health Organization and the Council of Europe, and of the legal and ethical considerations related to the documents of those organizations, and especially Health 2020, the WHO European policy framework supporting action across government and society for health and well-being. In addition, taking into consideration the country's aspiration and processes of integration with European Union (EU), the country strives to fulfil the requirements of this process related to development and implementation of national health and health related policies and standards in line with those of the EU. In particular, the new strategic positions of the EU, embedded into the Europe 2020 Strategy, which was adopted by the EU for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, presents an important guidance for linking health and development at national level.

Box 2. Commitments for health on the global, European and national agendas

International commitment to human rights and the right to health is embedded in a number of documents which implementation is monitored by a number of UN charter-based bodies:

- Human Rights Council
- Universal Periodic Review
- Commission on Human Rights (replaced by the Human Rights Council)
- Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council
- Human Rights Council Complaint Procedure

There are also ten human rights treaty bodies that monitor implementation of the core international human rights treaties:

- Human Rights Committee (CCPR)
- Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR)
- Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)
- Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
- Committee against Torture (CAT)
- Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT)
- Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
- Committee on Migrant Workers (CMW)
- Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

- Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED)

Along these lines, the WHO Constitution enshrines “...the highest attainable standard of health as a fundamental right of every human being.” The right to health includes access to timely, acceptable, and affordable health care of appropriate quality. Yet, about 100 million people globally are pushed below the poverty line as a result of health care expenditure ever year. Vulnerable and marginalized groups in societies tend to bear an undue proportion of health problems.¹

With its commitments for protecting the human rights, enshrined in the Constitution, Macedonia has ratified and is implementing a number of international treaties, a full list of which is available at the official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Macedonia.²

Being active part of creation of such a global context and voluntary adhering to the European and EU approaches and commitments, the Government has clearly expressed dedication to further investment in a concerted and inter-sectoral action for improved health and wellbeing of everyone in the 21st century and beyond.

Conclusion

Implementing the new agenda will require a strong national ownership. It will require an integrated approach to sustainable development and policy coherence across different sectors. It will require good governance and whole-of-government/whole-of-society efforts. Along these lines, the development of strategic partnerships and engagement with citizens and stakeholders will not only be necessary but critical to its success, given the universality and the inclusiveness that the 2030 Agenda brings onto the global scene.

Although there are no-one-size-fits all solutions, while taking into account the linkages between sub-national, national, regional and global levels, countries will have to ensure that no one is left behind.

1 WHO, Health and human rights, Fact sheet, <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs323/en/>

2 Ministry of Foreign Affairs official website: <http://www.mfa.gov.mk/index.php/en/>

A truly transformative shift would be required to implement an integrated approach to sustainable development, and to ensure that every person's health and wealth and human rights are respected. The vision and objectives of the national health policy framework "Together for Health for All" reflect contemporary developments and have the potential to facilitate this transformative shift at country level. Built on and guided by the Health 2020 European policy framework, it positions the country on the right track to achieve the SDGs. Efforts in the WHO Country Office have focused on supporting the national authorities for health in taking a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to respond to social, economic and environmental challenges critical for health development. The country has made good progress in many areas, and yet there is still much to do, and partnerships are essential.

The WHO Country Office will continue to support the country towards implementation of Health 2020 and the SDGs, and engage in a multisectoral response based on partnership. This will be the main reference point for further developing and implementing the national Health 2020.

Executive summary

The 2030 Agenda, adopted in September 2015 by the United Nations, integrates all three dimensions of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental), representing a major shift from multiple fragmented parallel processes to a single comprehensive and universal agenda for the people, planet and prosperity, grounded in peace, inclusiveness, strong governance, and global partnership. It also recognizes that so many of the development goals impact one another and are interrelated, interdependent, as a network with explicit links among goals through targets which will facilitate cross-sector integration, policy coherence and whole of government, whole of society approach.

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