

## **WHO Health Systems Research Strategy Proposed Outline**

### **Purpose of the HSR Strategy:**

The overall goal of this strategy is to promote the generation and use of HSR in order to strengthen health systems and accelerate improvements in health outcomes. In order to achieve this goal, the following objectives have been proposed:

1. *Stimulation of Interest:* This strategy will stimulate interest and demand for HSR among the research community, governments, and other relevant stakeholders. It will also clarify the role of HSR in facilitating health system changes and improvements in health outcomes.
2. *Defining Methods:* This strategy will define the boundaries of HSR and the methods for research, nomenclature, and taxonomies.
3. *Linking Research to Action:* This strategy will help to frame disease specific research within the broader context of health systems so that this research does not remain in fragmented 'silos'. This will ensure that knowledge generated from all health research can be effectively applied to the strengthening of health systems.
4. *Strengthening Capacity:* The strategy will provide guidance on issues relating to capacity needs for the *conduct* and *use* of HSR.

### **Organization of the HSR Strategy:**

The HSR Strategy will focus on 4 key areas: 1) conceptual issues; 2) mapping of HSR priorities and practices; 3) strategic and thematic issues; and 4) key recommendations.

1. *Conceptual Issues:* This section of the strategy will lay the foundation for understanding HSR and will address issues relating to the HSR concepts, priorities, methods, and standards. It will define the scope of HSR and describe the use of HSR by different users—including decision-makers at the national, provincial, and district levels as well as individual consumers of health care. This discussion will acknowledge the complexity of health systems, call attention to the challenges that arise from that complexity, and provide clear guidance on how to address those difficulties.

This section on conceptual issues will also demonstrate the relevance of HSR to disease specific issues and provide a broader context to help integrate

these vertical approaches into the overall health system. It will also facilitate a better understanding of the interactions between health and non-health sectors in the production of health.

2. Mapping of HSR priorities and practices: A landscaping exercise will be carried out with a limited number of countries to describe current priorities for HSR, existing capacities for HSR, mechanisms for financing HSR, and how HSR has been used in decision-making.
3. Strategic/Thematic Issues: This section of the strategy will address thematic areas to which HSR can be applied.
  - The MDG Context: The 2015 deadline for the MDGs represents a major milestone for the global health community. While there are some examples of success, there are also major shortcomings in progress towards these goals. This section will address the role of HSR in facilitating the achievement of the MDGs as well as its role in health systems strengthening in the post MDG era.
  - Embedding Research: There is a false dichotomy between research and practice. HSR should be 'embedded' as a routine component of program implementation and decision-making. This strategy should feature examples of how research has been successfully 'embedded' into decision-making and practice.
4. Recommendations: The recommendations should highlight the role of HSR as a bridging mechanism and the use of knowledge/research as a means of empowerment. A discussion of capacity strengthening for researchers and users of research will also be included in this section. The recommendations will be presented as 'options' so that countries can choose what they can implement according to the level of resources available to them.