

**Draft Venice Concluding Statement on Maximizing Positive Synergies
between health systems and Global Health Initiatives:**

Venice, Italy; June 23, 2009

We, participants at the High-level Dialogue on maximizing positive synergies between health systems and Global Health Initiatives, assembled in Venice, Italy on June 23rd, 2009:

1. **Welcome** the WHO-led multi-stakeholder effort to encourage and inform optimal interactions between Global Health Initiatives (GHIs) and country health systems, and acknowledge the importance of maximizing positive synergies in order to deliver better and more equitable health outcomes and enhanced value in return for resource inputs.
2. **Acknowledge** that the impact of global health initiatives on health outcomes and health systems, though variable, has been positive on balance and has helped to draw attention to deficiencies in health systems.
3. **Welcome** the findings of the synthesis report¹ and preliminary recommendations of the academic, civil society and implementers' consortia that form part of the Maximizing Positive Synergies effort, and endorse the need to:
 - i) Infuse the health systems strengthening agenda with the sense of ambition, the scale, the speed, and the increased resources that have characterized the GHIs;
 - ii) Agree on clear targets and indicators for health systems strengthening;
 - iii) Promote country capacity for strong national planning processes and better alignment of resources with national planning processes;
 - iv) Promote the meaningful involvement of civil society organisations in the governance of health systems and the delivery of health services;
 - v) Improve evidence-based decision making in health by building the capacity of countries to generate and use knowledge.
4. **Reinforce** the need for further research to inform policy and actions and recommend that evidence informed actions be pursued, with appropriate partners, to strengthen specific dimensions of health systems and their interaction with GHIs including, but not limited to, the health workforce, health information systems, access to essential medicines, supply chain management, governance, predictable, sustainable and equitable financing, and infrastructure, with a view to improving health outcomes, including maternal and child health.

¹ World Health Organization, Maximizing Positive Synergies Collaborative Group. An assessment of interactions between Global Health Initiatives and country health systems. Lancet. 2009; 373: 2437-63.

5. **Recognize** the urgent need to develop and strengthen the health workforce through increased education and training as well as strategies to sustain and retain all categories of health workers.
6. **Recognize** the importance of taking more concerted global and national action on the broader determinants of health including but not limited to, food and nutrition security, water and sanitation, gender equality and civil stability.
7. **Agree** on the central role played by communities and the need to build up their capacities to contribute to the planning and implementation of health services.
8. **Emphasize** that country-led, Primary Health Care policies and national plans, supported, as need be, by development partners, are a pre-requisite for sustainable improvements in health outcomes.
9. **Encourage** all development partners to further reduce duplication and fragmentation through more effective alignment of planning processes and resource allocations with country health systems through ongoing harmonization processes.
10. **Call on** the World Health Organization, drawing on its standards setting and convening roles, to work with partners to respond in a more aligned way to demands from countries for technical assistance in the implementation of country-driven and context-specific health systems-strengthening policies and plans.
11. **Call** on all national governments and development partners to mobilize required additional resources through existing and innovative means to accelerate and sustain health systems strengthening, inclusive of disease-specific work, to reach the shared goal of saving lives and improving the health of all people.