



World Health Organization

# HEALTH & HUMAN RIGHTS

How can human rights support work to strengthen health systems?

What is a human rights-based approach to health?

How does stigma and discrimination inhibit access to HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment?

## THE WORK OF WHO ON HEALTH AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Every country in the world is now party to at least one human rights treaty that addresses health-related rights, including the right to health and a number of rights related to conditions necessary for health.

WHO is actively strengthening its role in providing technical, intellectual and political leadership in the field of health and human rights.

Promoting and protecting health and respecting, protecting and fulfilling human rights are inextricably linked:

- Violations or lack of attention to human rights (e.g. harmful traditional practices, slavery, torture and inhuman and degrading treatment, violence against women) can have serious health consequences.
- Health policies and programmes can promote or violate human rights in their design or implementation (e.g. freedom from discrimination, rights to participation, privacy and information).
- Vulnerability to ill health can be reduced by taking steps to respect, protect and fulfil human rights (e.g. freedom from discrimination on account of ethnicity, sex and social status and the rights to food and nutrition, water, education and adequate housing).



HEALTH IS A FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHT

### WORK PROGRAMME

The work plan includes:

- Indicators for monitoring the right to health
- Tool to review national health sector strategic plans from a human rights perspective
- Training on health and human rights
- Improving Indigenous peoples' health and human rights

### OBJECTIVES

- Supporting governments to integrate a human rights-based approach in health development.
- Strengthening WHO's capacity to integrate a human rights-based approach in its work.
- Advancing the right to health in international law and international development processes.

## COMING SOON

### Global database

The database on legal instruments and case law on the right to health will allow users to search across international and regional instruments, national constitutions and case law by right (i.e. right to health, right to food) or by health topic (i.e. communicable disease, HIV/AIDS).

## PUBLICATIONS



**"25 Questions & Answers on Health and Human Rights"** provides answers to key questions which come to mind in exploring the linkages between health and human rights. *Available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Khmer, Mongolian, Nepalese, Russian, Turkish, Serbo-Croatian, Spanish, Tagalog (Filipino), Vietnamese, Korean and soon in Portuguese.*



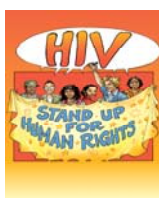
**"WHO's Contribution to the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance: Health and Freedom from Discrimination"**. This publication considers the linkages between racial discrimination and health. *Available in English, French and Spanish.*



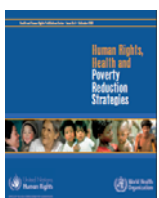
**"International Migration, Health and Human Rights"** draws attention to important human rights challenges that migration poses for health policy-makers. *Available in Arabic, English, French and Spanish.*



**"The Right to Health"** cartoon has been developed in recognition of the fact that improving awareness and understanding of the right to health is an essential prerequisite to operationalizing this right. *Available in Arabic, English, French and Spanish.*



**"HIV/AIDS Stand Up For Human Rights"** cartoon launched by the United Nations Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Joint Programme for HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and WHO, is designed to empower young people to promote human rights in relation to HIV/AIDS. *Available in English, French, Portuguese, Spanish & Thai, and soon in Tagalog (Filipino) & Tok Pisin (Papua New Guinea).*



**"Human Rights, Health and Poverty Reduction Strategies"** is intended to provide a tool for health policy-makers to design, implement and monitor a poverty reduction strategy through a human rights-based approach.



**"Human Rights and Gender Equality in Health Sector Strategies : How to Assess Policy Coherence"** This tool, developed in collaboration between WHO, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) is designed to support countries to strengthen national health strategies by applying human rights and gender equality commitments and obligations. The tool poses critical questions to identify gaps and opportunities in the review or reform of health sector strategies.

## FACT AND INFORMATION SHEETS

### **Fact sheet No 31 : Right to Health**

This fact sheet aims to shed light on the right to health in international human rights law as it currently stands. It illustrates implications for specific individuals and groups, elaborates upon States' obligations and ends with an overview of national, regional and international accountability and monitoring mechanisms. *Available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.*

### **Fact sheet No 35 : Right to Water**

This fact sheet explains what the right to water is, illustrates what it means for specific individuals and groups, and then elaborates upon State obligations with respect to the right. It concludes with an overview of national, regional and international accountability and monitoring mechanisms. *Available in English and French and soon in Spanish.*

### **Fact sheet on the Right to Health (2 pages)**

This fact sheet explains what is meant by the right to health, in an easily accessible format, and aims to raise understanding of this important human right. *Available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.*

### **Fact sheet on Indigenous People**

WHO, together with the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, published a fact sheet on Indigenous Health. *Available in English, French and Spanish.*

### **Information sheet on the Right to Health (2 pages) (EMRO)**

The Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office (EMRO) has issued an information sheet which outlines some of the key instruments that enshrine health as a human right and also explores the linkages between health and human rights. *Available in English*

### **Information sheet on Indigenous Peoples**

As WHO's focal point for indigenous peoples' health, the Health and Human Rights Team has issued a two-page information sheet on this topic outlining WHO's mandate, priority activities and relevant WHO publications. *Available in English, French and Spanish.*

### **Information sheet on Neglected Tropical Diseases**

This WHO Information sheet on a human rights-based approach to neglected tropical diseases aims to raise understanding and knowledge among health planners, human rights groups, development partners and civil society organizations. *Available in English, French and Spanish.*

### **Information sheet on a Human Rights-Based Approach to Health**

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the WHO have issued an information sheet on a Human Rights-Based Approach to Health (HRBA).

## REGION-SPECIFIC FACT AND INFORMATION SHEETS

### EMRO

African Charter on Human & Peoples Rights  
African Charter on the Rights & Welfare of the Child  
Arab Charter on Human Rights

Convention Against Torture & Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment  
Convention on the Elimination Of All forms of Discrimination Against Women  
International Convention on the Elimination Of All forms of Racial Discrimination  
International Covenant on Economic, Social & Cultural Rights  
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights  
Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers  
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

### PAHO

Indigenous Peoples  
Older Persons  
Persons exposed to second-hand tobacco smoke  
Persons living with HIV/AIDS  
Persons with disabilities  
Persons with mental disabilities

## COUNTRY-SPECIFIC FACT AND INFORMATION SHEETS

Health and Human Rights fact sheet : Maldives  
Health and Human Rights fact sheet : Mozambique  
Health and Human Rights fact sheet : Uganda

### VIDEO



"Health, my right!" The objective of this video is to raise awareness about, and understanding of, the right to health. Three students explore the key components of the right to health by reviewing international legal instruments and discussing how these apply in practice - in the everyday lives of people around the world.

**ALL THE ABOVE-MENTIONED PUBLICATIONS, FACT AND INFORMATION SHEETS CAN BE DOWNLOADED FROM OUR WEBSITE : <http://www.who.int/hhr/information/en/>**

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