

THE MEXICO STATEMENT ON HEALTH RESEARCH

Knowledge for better health: strengthening health systems

**FROM THE MINISTERIAL SUMMIT ON HEALTH RESEARCH
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We the Ministers of Health* and other participants from 58 countries

RECOGNIZE THAT

1. There remain serious obstacles to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in many low and middle income countries.
2. Strong national health systems are needed to deliver health care interventions to achieve the health-related MDGs; to address other communicable and noncommunicable diseases, sexual and reproductive health, injuries, violence, and mental ill health; and to improve health and health equity.
3. Research has a crucial but under-recognized part to play in strengthening health systems, improving the equitable distribution of high quality health services, and advancing human development.
4. Research is an essential component of strong health systems for informed and knowledgeable action to improve people's health and accelerate the rate of global, regional, and national development.
5. High quality research is facilitated if each country has a strong, transparent, and sustainable national health research system, defined as the people, institutions, and activities whose primary purpose is to generate relevant knowledge adhering to high ethical standards, which can be used to improve the health status of populations in an equitable way.
6. Health policy, public health, and service delivery should be based on reliable evidence derived from high quality research. Research evidence comes from various sources, including those that illuminate personal and cultural values and differences, draw on the needs of patients and providers, and measure the benefits and potential risks of health interventions. Ignoring research evidence is harmful to individuals and populations, and wastes resources.
7. The findings of high quality research should be not only accessible to decision makers but also communicated in ways that effectively inform policy, public health, and health care decision making. Research results must be published,

documented in internationally accessible registers and archives, and synthesized through systematic reviews. These actions can help to inform decisions about support for new research and to build public confidence in science.

8. Biomedical and social science research contribute greatly to our understanding about the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of a wide range of diseases. But crucial research aimed at strengthening public health and health systems has been neglected and under-funded. There should be a balanced and comprehensive research strategy that is inclusive of all relevant investigative approaches.
9. Health systems would be better able to deal with current global health challenges if existing interventions were adequately adopted and more effective interventions were developed for neglected diseases. Encouraging and supporting national, regional, and global product development and public-private partnerships, including partnership initiatives with developing countries, could contribute to fulfilling this need.

CONSCIOUS OF THE NEED TO

1. Re-affirm the culture and practice of high quality research, knowledge generation, and its application as critical to (i) the attainment of health targets within the MDGs; (ii) the performance of health systems, including expanding the capacity of human resources for health; (iii) the vitality of a country's socio-economic development; and (iv) the achievement of health equity.
2. Strengthen evidence-based evaluation of the consequences of health and other policies and practices at national, regional, and local levels.
3. Address the social determinants of health, including those related to gender, income, education, ability, conflict and ethnicity.
4. Involve and inform users of evidence to create demand for research and to foster participation in the research process.
5. Strengthen national health research systems by building relevant capacity, developing capable leadership, providing essential monitoring and evaluation tools, improving capacity for ethical review of research, and putting in place necessary ethical standards and regulations for population health, health services, and clinical research.
6. Promote access to reliable, relevant, and up-to-date evidence on the effects of interventions, based on systematic reviews of the totality of available research findings.

7. Identify under-funded areas of research, such as on health systems and public health, where increased resources and leadership would accelerate the achievement of critical health goals.
8. Emphasize that research is a global endeavour based on the sharing of knowledge and information.
9. Build and strengthen public trust and confidence in science.

CALL FOR ACTION BY

1. *National governments* to commit to fund the necessary health research to ensure vibrant health systems and reduce inequity and social injustice.**
2. *National governments* to establish and implement a national health research policy.
3. *National governments* to promote activities to strengthen national health research systems, including the creation of informed decision makers, priority setting, research management, monitoring performance, adopting standards and regulations for high quality research and its ethical oversight, and ensuring community, nongovernmental organization, and patient participation in research governance.
4. *National governments* to establish sustainable programmes to support evidence-based public health and health care delivery systems, and evidence-based health related policies.
5. *National governments, WHO secretariat, and the international community* to support networking of national research agencies in conducting collaborative research to address global health priorities.
6. *Funders of health research* to support a substantive and sustainable programme of health systems research aligned with priority country needs.
7. *All major stakeholders*, facilitated by *WHO secretariat*, to establish a platform linking a network of international clinical trials registers to ensure a single point of access and the unambiguous identification of trials.
8. *All major stakeholders* to strengthen or to establish activities to communicate, improve access to, and promote the use of reliable, relevant, unbiased, and timely health information.
9. *The international health research community* to ensure broad support for national, regional, and global partnerships, including public-private partnerships, to

accelerate the development of essential drugs, vaccines, and diagnostics, and to ensure the equitable delivery of these interventions.

10. *WHO secretariat* to report progress on the Mexico Statement at the UN Millennium Development Goals Summit in 2005, at a conference on health systems in 2006, and at the next Ministerial Summit on health research in 2008; and to convene a ministerial level international conference on research into human resources for health.

* Named Ministers or ministerial representatives to come.

** For example, the Commission on Health Research for Development in 1990 recommended that “developing countries should invest at least 2% of national health expenditures in research and research capacity strengthening, and at least 5% of project and program aid for the health sector from development aid agencies should be earmarked for research and research capacity strengthening”. WHO should consider allocating a proportion of its country budgets to support high-quality health systems research.