Putting health at the heart of the Green Economy agenda

Making the links for Rio+20

Department of Public Health and Environment
Key Messages

1. **Health is an important input to sustainable development** – healthy people are better able to learn, work and contribute to their economies and societies.
   - **Universal access** to health services is key input to better health.

2. **Sustainable Development can improve health** – smart strategies for transport, housing, energy & agriculture reduce NCDs and diseases of poverty, and enhance health (e.g. physical activity).
   - **This is not automatic!** "Health in green economy" opportunities have not been fully exploited.
   - **Health risks and benefits of different economic development strategies** need more explicit consideration.

3. **Health indicators can measure the success of sustainable development goals and support governance.**
Smart development choices can reduce pollution/injury and improve health
What needs to be done?

Linking health to Green Economy strategies…
Transport reliant on private vehicles increases congestion, pollution, and physical inactivity.

Safe walking/cycling and rapid transit networks can reduce injury, cardiovascular disease & support healthy physical activity.

Cycling to work reduced premature mortality by 30% among commuter groups in Shanghai & Copenhagen.

Rapid transit/NMT improves access to schools, jobs & services for poor, children, women, elderly & disabled, improving equity.
Example 2: Clean household energy for the world's poor is central to improving women's and child health

- Avert 1 million deaths/yr from COPD & cancers (mostly women);
- Halve rates of childhood pneumonia;
- Reduce time spent fuel gathering & promote gender equality;
- Support UN 'Year of Sustainable Energy' & MDGs;
- Reduce deforestation, urban air pollution & climate change emissions of methane/black carbon & CO₂.
Example 3: 'Greening' health facilities can expand coverage of maternal, child & emergency services

18-58% of health clinics in five African countries had NO electricity at all. Women give birth in the dark, by candlelight, by car headlights.

5-12% of clinics surveyed in the same six countries lacked access to clean water (from an "improved" protected well or piped source).

Small solar panels generate basic electricity for lights, cold chain/vaccines, diagnostics, telecommunications, water pumps.
Health as a measure of our Sustainable Development 'vision'…
The Health Sector can lead with evidence and indicators of Sustainable Development

- Evidence on health impacts of green economy strategies/innovations
- Wider use of Health Impact Assessment (HIA) to ensure health as an income of policies
- Define health-relevant goals, indicators, and tools for measuring/monitoring results
Health Metrics - Examples of indicators for Health and Sustainable Development

**Sustainable Cities:**
% of urban population exposed to air pollution above recommended WHO Air Quality limits.

**Safe and Healthy transport:**
% of the population with access to (living within 1km) rapid transit/public transport.
% of urban roadways with dedicated walking and cycling infrastructure.

**Energy** - % of households using clean fuels/cooking and heating technologies.

**Green jobs** - % of workplaces/jobs meeting basic occupational health and safety standards – including air, water, exposure to chemicals and radiation, lighting & ventilation.

**Water** - % of global population with access to climate resilient safe drinking water and improved sanitation.

**Food** - % of population with access to healthy foods, % undernourished; % obese; % inadequate micronutrients and dietary balance.

**Health care** – % of health care facilities with access to clean energy and water supplies.

**Governance** – % of large projects integrating health co-benefits considerations into their planning and implementation, e.g. through a health impact assessment (HIA).
Health at the heart of Rio+20
Green Economy governance & policies

- Universal access to health services is essential to Sustainable Development.
- Health co-benefits (and risks) need to be considered in green economy policies and investments.
- Health indicators can provide the metrics for sustainable development monitoring and evaluation.

For more on WHO's Health in a Green Economy: http://www.who.int/hia/green_economy/en/index.html