PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH IN SEAR – AN OVERVIEW

Health Systems Department

Regional Consultation on Social Determinants of Health
New Delhi, India, 15-16 Sept. 2005
Presentation Outline

- Introduction, Situation & Perspectives
- Regional Interventions
- Conclusion
Introduction

• Social determinants of health and health inequalities (socio-economic status, racial and ethnic differences in access, environmental & employment conditions, urbanization, globalization)

• Complexities in SEAR: demographic, political, environmental, natural calamities and geographic context – and relationship to health
Situation & perspectives

- Poverty
- Child/infant/maternal mortality
- Employment
- Women/gender
- Environment, water and sanitation
- Access to health services
- Rate of urbanization
- Globalization
- Education levels
Hunger/Poverty hot spots: More than 20% underweight children under age 5

Source: United Nations Statistics Division, Millennium Indicators database
Maternal Mortality Ratio: MDG Goals

- Countries: Bangladesh, Bhutan, DPR Korea, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste


- Data Source: World Health Organization
Population using solid fuels, by income level.

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<tr>
<th>Low-Income Country</th>
<th>Middle-Income Country</th>
<th>High-Income Country</th>
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<tr>
<td>Between 50% - 94%</td>
<td>95% +</td>
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<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>Myanmar</td>
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<td>Thailand</td>
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Legend

- Middle-Income Country
- Low-Income Country

Source: WHO/WPRO, Turning Promises into Progress - Attaining the Health MDGs in Asia and the Pacific, 2005
Urbanization

- Urban population in the Region which was 455 million in 2000 increased to 520 million in 2005.

- Moving from rural villages to million plus cities (53 in 2005) is the norm of migration in the Region.

- In the mega cities, people usually reside in the slums with no facilities.
• **Primary school enrolment ratio**: 90% for boys and 87% for girls

• **Secondary school enrolment ratio**: 53% for boys and 46% for girls (Range 2% to 57%)

• **Adult literacy rates**: 76% men and 56% women (In 2004, there were 128 million men and 226 million women illiterates in the Region)

• **Political participation of women**: (percentage of seats held by women in parliament) is 11% - ranging from 2% to 28%.
Out of pocket spending on health as a % of total expenditure; 2002

Regional strategies/initiatives

- Policy coherence and capacities in Trade and Health.
- Health promotion: draft strategy and Bangkok Declaration.
- Leprosy Elimination Strategy.
- Reproductive Health Strategy.
- Environmental Health.
- Other programmes
Regional strategies/initiatives

Declaration on Health Development in the South East Asia Region in the 21st Century – 1997

- Closing the gaps and inequalities in health in our societies;
- Creating conditions that promote health and self reliance;
- Ensuring basic health services to all, especially the poor, women and other vulnerable groups;
- Upholding and enforcing health ethics, and
- Placing health at the center of development.
Regional strategies/initiatives

Monograph on Poverty & Health – 1997

• Resource allocation to be guided by not only macroeconomic fundamentals but also social fundamentals.

• Micro interventions require multisectoral design and implementation.

• Vulnerable groups in countries and the special nature of their poverty or vulnerability should be identified.
Regional strategies/initiatives

Bi-regional Health Financing Strategy

• Removal of financial barriers to seeking care.

• Equity in service access and contributions.

• Achieving universal coverage & strengthening social safety nets.
Regional strategies/initiatives

- Public Health Initiative
  - Positioning PH high on regional & national agendas
  - Strengthening PH education
  - Enhancing technical cooperation for new SPH
  - Establishing network of PHIs
  - Defining package of essential PH functions
Regional strategies/Initiatives

Regional Parliamentarians Forum:

- Advocacy
- Topics discussed:
  - Women, health and environment
  - Health of the vulnerable population
  - Macro-economics and health
  - Healthy public policy
Conclusion

• Multi-sectoral involvement: beyond health
• Coordinated action between local, national, and global partners for health promotion
• Strengthening national health systems: with particular emphasis to complex humanitarian emergencies/epidemics/inequities
• Pursuing the primary health care approach
• Relevant & adequate Knowledge and Evidence to address the social determinants of health inequalities.