

**High-Level Forum on the Health MDGs**

**Preparatory Note**

**Advisory Group Meeting  
Dublin, 29 September 2005**

## **HIGH LEVEL FORUM ON THE HEALTH MDGS**

### ***Preparatory note for a meeting of the HLF Advisory Group, Dublin 29<sup>th</sup> September 2005***

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Advisory Group meeting is to discuss progress in the work streams of the High Level Forum on the Health MDGs, as agreed in the preliminary planning meeting in Paris in January 2005 and the meeting of the Advisory Group in Geneva in April 2005. The meeting will provide an opportunity to review what the High Level Forum should be aiming to achieve in these areas and to examine how it adds value to other processes that are currently taking place. The meeting in Dublin will be the last one before the HLF, and will discuss policies that will be put forward at the HLF in Paris. This note is designed to act as a brief update on progress.

#### **Item 1: Global Health Partnerships**

HLF2 identified the need for further work on the impact of Global Health Partnerships at country level with a view to producing principles on best practice.. A Working Group on GHPs was established, which met in Geneva in April 2005 to: review available evidence on the role, impact, operation and aid effectiveness of Global Health Partnerships; identify key gaps in evidence; and discuss country-level coordination of GHPs, the role of development partners in GHPs and the role of GHPs in health system strengthening.

A country-level study was commissioned by the Gates Foundation and undertaken by McKinsey & Co. Its primary focus was to examine the transaction costs at country level of multiple GHPs and explore how the costs might be reduced; it was based on a survey of 20 countries, including six field visits. The HLF Secretariat constituted a small Technical Advisory Group that met twice during the Summer in Washington with the McKinsey team and the Gates Foundation, providing inputs into the design and execution of the country case studies This work will be presented to the Working Group on GHPs on 28 September.

The country study, along with existing work by DFID and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, has informed the paper on alignment and harmonization principles for GHPs, submitted to the Advisory Group. Its aim is to provide the basis for dialogue with selected major GHPs with a view to preparing a position on its findings. It is also anticipated that agreement and clarification can be reached on the specific and practical steps that GHPs might make in order to operationalize these principles. Following feedback from the Advisory Group, discussions with the GHPs will begin and the paper finalised in time for the November HLF. We will also consider how to achieve greater synergy between the various streams of work that are currently going on in relation to the role of GHPs.

#### **Item 2: Health in Fragile States**

Participants at HLF2 agreed that preparations for HLF3 should take forward the harmonization agenda in the health sector in post-conflict transition countries, reviewing both the role of humanitarian NGOs and their relation to government structures, and the relationship between bilateral and multilateral actors. Further, the HLF secretariat was asked to undertake work on poor underperformers and the aid instruments most suited to providing support for health where

institutions and policies are weak, setting out lessons learned in different country settings and outlining principles for good practice and propositions for action.

In response, the secretariat commissioned two separate papers, one focusing on post-conflict countries and another on fragile states characterized by chronically weak capacity and/or willingness. To underpin the work on the second paper, a number of country case studies were carried out, through field visits and desk reviews (Papua New Guinea, Laos, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Nepal, Guinea, Zimbabwe, Chad). On 19 and 20 September, an informal consultation was held in London, with 25 participants from humanitarian and development NGOs, bilateral and multilateral agencies, think tanks and members of the HLF secretariat, to discuss issues of health service delivery in fragile states.

For Paris, a brief note setting out key findings, principles and propositions will be prepared, probably with short executive summaries of the two papers as attachments. At Dublin, we will outline these propositions for discussion by the Advisory Group.

The HLF Fragile States Working Group has also been working in close collaboration with members of the DAC Fragile States Group's Task Team on Service Delivery. A meeting of this team is taking place in New York on 23 September (just prior to the HLF Advisory Group meeting) and provides a further opportunity to discuss findings and propositions arising from this work and report back at Dublin.

### **Item 3: Fiscal space and aid sustainability:**

At the second High-Level Forum in Abuja, the secretariat of the HLF was asked to take forward work on fiscal space by: (1) clarifying the concept of fiscal space and sustainability in the presence of long term grant funding and concessional lending at the country level and the implications for sector expenditure ceilings; and (2) working with other development partners on possible mechanisms to increase the volume and predictability of funding

In response, the HLF secretariat has commissioned two papers, which have been submitted to the Advisory Group. The first paper defines the concepts of fiscal space, fiscal sustainability, aid volatility and related topics from the perspective of the health sector, as well as providing a summary of recent trends in aid for health and evidence of aid volatility in the health sector. The second paper attempts to look at solutions to the issues raised in the first paper. It looks at what can be done to reduce aid volatility, how long-term commitments can be reconciled with donor concerns about effective use of aid, and how to ensure that donor commitments are reflected in expenditure plans and support areas of priority health spending.

The Advisory Group is invited to comment on these two papers, and make recommendations on how the session on fiscal space should be handled in Paris in November.

### **Item 4: Reporting back themes**

#### *Human Resources for Health*

The issue of human resources for health has been a major topic of discussion at each of the first two HLF meetings. Since Abuja there has been progress both at country level, establishing an

international technical working group and laying the ground work for a Global Health Work Force Alliance. In Dublin we will hear a progress report on developments to date and discuss how the issue of HR will be handled at HLF 3 in Paris.

#### **Item 5: After the High Level Forum**

HLF3 is scheduled to be the last meeting of the Forum in its current form. Given that the HLF is seen by many as a useful and unique mechanism for taking stock of developments in the health sector, it was suggested that the Secretariat explore options for how these functions may be carried forward after November. At the Advisory Group meeting in Geneva April 2005, the HLF Secretariat was tasked with producing a Futures Paper outlining such options. This has been produced, and submitted to the Advisory Group for review. The paper will be revised in time for presentation in Paris in November.

#### **Item 6: Update on Logistics**

It has now been confirmed that the President of the World Bank, Mr Paul Wolfowitz, the Director General of World Health Organization and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of France, Dr Philippe Douste-Blazy, will all be attending the High Level Forum in person.

It is anticipated that their presence at the meeting will help to secure high level participation from invited Ministers of Health, Finance and Development Cooperation as well as heads of agencies. Participants have been informed of the dates of the High Level Forum by email and the formal invitation letters are currently being signed by Mr Wolfowitz, Dr Lee and Dr Douste-Blazy.

The Centre for International Conferences on the Avenue Kléber in central Paris has been made available for the Forum by Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France. Plenary facilities with French and English interpretation are provided as well as four additional "break out" meeting rooms, three of which are also equipped with interpretation facilities if needed.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will host a reception on the evening of 14 November. Further details of the venue and timing will be made available in due course.

The HLF Secretariat will be present throughout the Forum, with additional support being kindly provided by colleagues at the World Bank office in Paris.

Three 4\* and 3\* hotels have been reserved within walking distance of the Conference Centre each of which is equipped with full internet access for guests. Additional computer facilities with internet access for participants at the Centre are also being arranged.

#### **Item 7: Communications and Miscellaneous**

As with previous High-Level Forums, it is envisaged that communications for HLF3 will focus less on the meetings themselves and more on the substantive issues being considered. There will, however, be an effort to place opinion pieces or editorials on the issues debated at HLF3 in leading newspapers and magazines.