IHP+ Update no. 20, March 2011

Uniting for a Healthier Future

Highlights: New IHP+ members, country compacts, summary of 3rd IHP+ country health sector teams meeting, plus updates on Joint Assessment of National Strategies (JANS), IHP+ mutual accountability, the Joint Financing Agreement in Nepal, and the Health Systems Funding Platform.

1. IHP+ welcomes 13 new members since March 2010

As of March 2011, the IHP+ membership stands at 50 partners, including 25 developing country members.

In a side event to the opening day of the 63rd World Health Assembly in May 2010, IHP+ welcomed 10 new members: Belgium, Benin, Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mauritania, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Spain, Togo and, Viet Nam. Ministers of Health from the 10 new member countries signing the Global Compact were joined by Dr Margaret Chan, Director General of the World Health Organization, Mr Rakesh Nangia, Director Strategy and Operations, Human Development, the World Bank, and many other existing IHP+ signatories. Read more…

Cameroon, Chad, and Pakistan are the newest IHP+ members. Pakistan signed the Global Compact during the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Regional Committee Meeting in Cairo, Egypt in September 2010.

2. Country compacts signed

Benin and Nigeria signed country compacts in November and December 2010, respectively, and Togo signed a Memorandum of Understanding with health and development partners in February 2011. Read more on these agreements and other IHP+ related news.

3. Third IHP+ Country Teams meeting, Brussels, Belgium, 9-10 December, 2010

The overall objective was to review progress on putting the Paris principles on aid effectiveness into practice in the health sector. Participants included representatives from ministries of health and finance, civil society and local development partners in 24 developing countries, and staff from 21 global development agencies.

Key conclusions:
- There are real costs when aid is ineffective. The aid effectiveness agenda matters as much – if not more – today as it did five years ago. IHP+ is helping create the necessary momentum for better use of resources and alignment with stronger national strategies and plans. In short, this is "worth the effort,"
- Aid effectiveness and results go hand in hand. There is clear progress now on advancing aid effectiveness principles, and a real need to properly document this and the results achieved.
- The momentum generated around one health strategy/plan (including one fiduciary arrangement and one monitoring and evaluation framework) and its implementation must be maintained. Getting alignment is a messy business and takes leadership and compromise.
- New ways of working through joint action and collective responsibility need to be consolidated. More focus is now needed on more effective monitoring platforms and on mutual accountability.

4. Update on Joint Assessment of National Strategies (JANS)

Joint assessment of national health plans using the JANS tool is expanding. The latest JANS news continued on page 2...

Useful links: | WHO | UNICEF | UNAIDS | World Bank | UNFPA | GAVI | Gates Foundation | Global Fund |
By early 2011 five countries, Nepal, Ethiopia, Uganda, Ghana and Viet Nam, had completed formal joint assessments of their new national health sector strategies or plans.

In each case, the JANS principles were observed; the tool was used unchanged, but different processes of assessment were developed suited to in-country circumstances. Read the JANS country reports and lessons learned documents.

Other countries are also using the JANS tools more informally at different stages of plan development and implementation. And upcoming joint assessments have been confirmed in Mali and Rwanda.

The JANS tool has also been agreed as a key assessment tool for the Health Systems Funding Platform (see below for more on the Platform).

5. Promoting Mutual Accountability: technical meeting and "round 2" monitoring compact commitments

In May 2010, representatives from many IHP+ signatories gathered for a partners technical meeting during the World Health Assembly to review progress on improving mutual accountability. Dr Victor Makwenge Kaput, Minister of Health, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and meeting co-chair Dr Stephen Karengera, Director of Planning and Policy, Rwanda reported on the approaches used in their own countries, and some of the results to date.

Minister Makwenge Kaput reported reduced transaction costs in DRC as a result.

The independent consortium IHP+Results provided additional perspectives from the first round of monitoring progress against IHP+ compact commitments. This was followed by discussion and comments from developing country, bilateral donor and international agency partners.

The second round of monitoring progress against compact commitments by the IHP+Results consortium is now complete. A simpler, more systematic approach was used in round 2, with a smaller set of indicators better aligned to those used to monitor implementation of the Paris Declaration. There was also increased participation in this round, with 10 developing countries and 15 development agencies participating. The IHP+Results report is expected around the end of March 2011. Read more: IHP+Results web site.

6. Joint Financing Agreement in Nepal

Following the JANS in Nepal and establishing funding under the Health Systems Funding Platform, a significant number of pooled and non-pooled donors – including AusAID, DFID, GAVI, UNFPA, UNICEF, USAID, the World Bank and WHO – are part of a Joint Financing Agreement (JFA) with the country. Read more on the Joint Financing Agreement in Nepal.

7. Update on the Health Systems Funding platform

With the work-plan agreed, Platform partners – GAVI, Global Fund and the World Bank with facilitation from WHO – have begun working with countries to (i) harmonize existing processes, such as financial management arrangements and monitoring and evaluation, and (ii) in a few countries, work towards basing new funding on a jointly assessed national strategy. In addition, GAVI and Global Fund are developing a joint HSS proposal form to be used for applying for funds from the two agencies. Read the Platform background documents and information.