

C20 Health Working Group Press Release on the occasion of the G20 Health Ministers Meeting – 19 May 2017

G20 can save millions of lives – and billions of dollars

A group of key civil society organisations has called on global leaders to prioritise global health at the upcoming meeting of G20 Health Ministers in order to save millions of lives, and billions of dollars.

The Civil20 (C20), whose group includes key organisations working on global development, has called on the G20 to anchor health in the permanent agenda for future years as a key driver of human and economic development.

“Health is one of the most important prerequisites for sustainable development and growth” said Marwin Meier, Manager Health and Advocacy at World Vision Germany and C20 Health Co-chair. “The German presidency has given health a prominent role in this year’s G20 discussions, but it cannot stop here. It must stay on the agenda.”

The C20 has highlighted 3 key areas for action if global leaders are to be serious about ensuring the future health of the global population. Recent pandemics, such as Ebola, have highlighted the need for effective pandemic preparedness to be coupled with resilient national health systems which are based on universal health coverage if they are to be contained and the devastating effects minimised.

“Weak and under-resourced health systems are not only allowing outbreaks such as Ebola and Zika to rapidly spread, with a vast human toll and economic cost, but also leave large segments of populations without access to quality health care,” says Katri Bertram, Save the Children Germany. “A planned pandemic exercise by G20 Health Ministers in Berlin is only a first step. Actions need to ensure that quality health interventions are based on sustainable financing, strengthening community based health services, and include all people, in particular those most often left behind.”

The C20 has highlighted the prioritisation of tackling tuberculosis (TB) through increased investment into research and development of new treatments as vital to overcoming the threat posed by drug resistant infections. Furthermore, for a sustainable global health response the reform and strengthening of the WHO and other multilateral institutions including the Global Fund, GAVI and UNAIDS, with substantial increases in assessed contributions as based on global health need, must be considered a priority.

“TB is the world’s deadliest infectious disease and is the only airborne drug-resistant infection. The majority of predicted deaths and global economic loss falls on G20 countries. By increasing research and development for new drugs and vaccines to fight TB the G20 would provide instant global health impact saving millions of lives for generations to come,” says Rachael Crockett, RESULTS UK and C20 Health co-chair.

The G20 Health Ministers are due to meet on 19 May and will be a clear moment to understand the future priorities of global leaders in the context of much political uncertainty.

Notes to editor

Civil20 is the G20 engagement group of the international civil society. It represents organisations and individuals from all continents, giving civil society a loud voice in the G20. Find out more at www.civil-20.org.

The C20 Health Working Group has written recommendations for G20 and can be found in the policy brief here: <http://civil-20.org/media/positions/>

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