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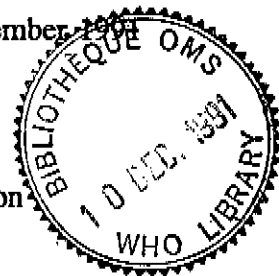
# THE SAITAMA DECLARATION

## A CALL FOR NEW PUBLIC HEALTH ACTION

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Adopted at the  
Saitama Public Health Summit, Omiya City  
Saitama Prefecture, Japan, 17-20 September, 1991

Cosponsored by  
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and the  
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## SAITAMA PUBLIC HEALTH SUMMIT

The World Health Organization and the Department of Public Health, Saitama Prefectural Government, Japan, cosponsored a "Public Health Summit" in Omiya City, Saitama Prefecture, Japan, from 17 to 20 September 1991.

The theme of the conference was "Health and Economic Development". Health is central to the well-being of individuals and the sustainable development of communities. Socioeconomic development and the fulfilment of human potential require a healthy population and an adequate health infrastructure. Every nation is concerned with the rising cost of health care, which exceeds the national average for overall cost increases. The demands of an aging population, the importance of diseases caused by life-style and by personal behaviour choices, the profusion of new technology, the change of roles being played by private and public sectors, and the impact of environmental factors, are some of the issues that have important financial implications for the health sector.

Health and economic development are therefore mutually dependent. It is clear, however, that the health sector is not always able to present its development programme to the economists and political leaders who control the allocation of resources, in terms that are easily understood.

It is also clear that policy makers in both developing and developed countries are increasingly concerned to find equitable, realistic and sustainable approaches to improve the health situation.

This led to a decision by the World Health Organization and the Saitama Prefectural Government, Japan, to bring together in Omiya City, a group of eminent persons from all continents to discuss the relationship between public health and economic development from different angles. The four main themes of the meeting were: the effects of economic development on health; the role of public health in a changing environment; public health in a pluralistic health sector; and the development of public health in the 21st century.

Far-ranging discussions during three days, based on position papers by authorities in specific specialties, led to the adoption of the "Saitama Declaration", which calls for new orientation in public health action. The participants reaffirmed their commitment to the goal of health for all and the primary health care approach as the strategy for attaining it. Recognizing a vitally important link between health and socioeconomic development, the Summit called for a review of the concepts and practices of public health; for improved public health education in the 21st century; for promoting healthy life-styles; and for an integrated approach to health, the environment and socioeconomic development. Recommendations for action to implement the Declaration were also proposed.

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## THE SAITAMA DECLARATION

### A CALL FOR NEW PUBLIC HEALTH ACTION

The participants in the Public Health Summit which was held in Omiya City, Saitama Prefecture, Japan, from 17 to 20 September 1991 to address the changes in scope and functions of public health required by emerging trends in the political, social and economic environment:

- Reaffirm their commitment to the goal of health for all and the Primary Health Care approach as the strategy for attaining it;
- Note that in the years since the Declaration of Alma-Ata, despite progress in implementing the strategy, and a narrowing of the differences in health status between developing and developed countries, an unacceptable gap still exists between them; in the case of the least developed countries this gap is actually widening;
- Observe that recent changes in political, socioeconomic, epidemiological, demographic, ecological and technological situations will impose an even greater burden on allocation and distribution of health sector resources which are already stretched;

- Recognize that there is a critical relationship between health, socioeconomic development and the environment, and a need to establish integrated partnerships involving those with major responsibilities in the health, economic, political and environmental sectors;
- Stress the need to define health priorities and optimal resource allocation and utilization and to maintain adequate financing for health in order to achieve the common goal of health for all and at the same time ensure equity and excellence;
- Call for new public health action in the light of current realities in order to support the attainment of health for all along the following lines:

1. Changing patterns of public health

Review the concept and practice of public health in the context of changing health situations in countries in order to better integrate health with, and contribute to, economic development.

2. Education and training of health personnel

Plan for improved public health education for the 21st century, and enhance health knowledge, skills and values at all levels; promote closer partnerships with other sectors, stressing multidisciplinary approaches in management, community development and global health development action.

### 3. Life-style and environment

Identify ways of promoting healthy life-styles and preventing types of behaviour harmful to health and the environment, such as inappropriate nutrition, smoking, alcohol abuse, violence and indiscriminate waste disposal and pollution; such efforts should be undertaken in collaboration with health professionals, communities, industry and schools, as a long-term investment for the prevention of behaviour-related diseases such as AIDS, for a productive life, and for healthy aging.

### 4. Population growth and development

Taking account of cultural perspectives, promote family planning to lessen the burden on socioeconomic development and the environment; reduce the impact of population movement due to economic, political and social factors (urbanization, migration, refugees, travellers) as an essential component of sustainable development.

### 5. Integrated approach to health, the environment and socioeconomic development

Promote more extensive integration of policy-making and programme development across sectors at international, national and local levels in the fields of health, social and economic development, and the environment. Better management of integrated programmes will enhance equitable, cost-effective and affordable use of resources and ensure their sustainability.

6. Research on health, environment and economic development

Encourage and support research on critical issues involved in the interaction of health, environment and economic development, including macro-economic analysis, and promote research on priority issues in such fields as epidemiology, demography, health systems development and financing, appropriate technology for health, and pharmaceuticals, to support the implementation of health for all strategies.

7. Solidarity in development

Improve solidarity in a global approach to generate, distribute and utilize public resources for sustainable development, promotion of health and protection of the environment, involving partnerships with all types of public collectivities as well as private and non-governmental sectors.

8. Public involvement in dynamics of development

Provide opportunities for the full involvement of individuals and communities in the choice of priorities, the development of programmes, the management of services, and the evaluation of outcomes.

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9. Ethics and equity in health services and development

Promote the development of health and environmental programmes that respect the principles of ethics, equity and social justice, at the same time ensuring quality and affordability.

10. The public/private mix and human resources for health

Search for the best balance between state interventions and markets, avoiding the current polarization of the public/private dichotomy, in order to ensure equitable access to effective health care.

11. Appropriate technology for health

Encourage and support advances in biomedical and public health technology that are most appropriate for countries at different levels of development, and promote international collaboration in technology assessment in relation to local conditions while respecting the ethical principles underlying the use of technology for individuals and populations.

12. Role of women

Provide appropriate education, information and support in order to strengthen their capacities and enhance their role in relation to health and development.

### 13. Information and communication

Enlist the participation of the media, and encourage wider and more effective communication across sectors, in order to improve awareness of the interaction of health, development and the environment, and support the implementation of related policies.

### 14. Roles of WHO

WHO should encourage and support more effective approaches to the interaction of health, development and the environment, particularly assisting the developing countries in their efforts to advance their development status, monitoring and evaluating the world health situation and development in terms of outputs and outcomes in the wider context of social and economic development, and supporting Member States to formulate sustainable and equitable health policies to achieve health for all; and secure adequate resources for their implementation.

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