

WEBSITE

www.who.int1211 GENEVA 27 SWITZERLAND - TELEPHONE: (41) 22.791.21.11 - FAX: (41) 22.791.31.11 - E-MAIL: inf@who.int

a 85374
 Note for the press 18
 9 September 2004

INVESTMENT IN POOR PEOPLE'S HEALTH IS THE KEY TO ACHIEVING ALL EIGHT MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

New York - Greater investment in the health of poor people is key to the reduction of poverty and achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This is the message from Dr. Andrew Cassels, director of the department charged with MDGs for the World Health Organization (WHO), to the 57th Annual Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), *Millennium Development Goals: Civil Society Takes Action*, the premier Non-Government event held at the United Nations in New York each year.

"Achieving the health-related MDGs is one of the greatest challenges in international development, not least because they include the goal of reversing the global epidemic of HIV/AIDS and achieving steep declines in child and maternal mortality," says Dr. Cassels.

With Dr. Cassels representing WHO, this is the first time the international health agency takes part in the annual United Nations NGO conference in New York. In his address, Dr. Cassels identifies the major challenges to achieving the health MDG. Most importantly, Cassels says progress in the health-related goals is attainable and identifies the ways and means to make the health goals a reality. Moreover, this health-related progress is seen as underpinning progress towards meeting other MDGs - for example, those related to universal primary education and poverty reduction.

The key points of Dr. Cassels' speech:

- The challenges are clear: They include major improvements in health care delivery systems, public sector management, new forms of engagement with civil society and the private sector, and policies and interventions beyond the health sector itself.
- The major problem is not a lack of effective interventions: It is a question of making sure that the benefits of existing technologies are available to those who need them.
- Scaling up requires significantly more resources.
- Sustained progress depends on changes in the ways people and governments and countries north and south work together: The development of a fair system of international trade, the management of debt, ensuring access to the benefits of technology to all people on the basis of need, not ability to pay.

The WHO-coordinated Midday Workshop: "The MDGs, Health and Development Policy" takes place on Thursday, September 9th at 1:15 to 2:45 in Conference Room #4 of the United Nations. Other Workshop participants include:

Note for the press
Page 2

- Mark Plant: Representing the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Mr.Plant is the Assistant Director in the Department of Policy Development and Review. He works on policies regarding IMF work in Low-Income Countries.
- Heather Grady: Oxfam Great Britain, Global Lead on Rights and Institutional Accountability for Oxfam Great Britain. Ms. Grady guides Oxfam's policy and programme work on PRSPs and MDGs, in particular on goal 8, making links to the global advocacy work aimed toward the World Bank, the IMF and donor community.
- A Senior Representative from a Ministry of Health from the region of the Americas. (TBC)
- Dr. Andrew Cassels, World Health Organization, Director, Department of MDGs, Health and Development Policy.

For further information, please contact Cecil Hayerkamp, World Health Organization at the UN, Department of MDGs, Health and Development Policy, New York; Tel.: +1 212 963 8265, mobile +1 646 269 4411, email: haverkamp@un.org; or Jacqueline Toupin, Communications Officer, Department of MDGs, Health and Development Policy, WHO, Geneva; Tel.: +41 22 791 4738, mobile: +41 79 611 9880, email: toupinj@who.int

All WHO Press Releases, Fact Sheets and Features as well as other information on this subject can be obtained on Internet on the WHO home page: <http://www.who.int/>