

# NEWS AND EVENTS

## GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON HEALTH PROMOTION ISSUES, NAIROBI CALL TO ACTION

The 7<sup>th</sup> Global Conference on Health Promotion was held from 26 to 30 October 2009 in Nairobi, Kenya – the first time a global conference on health promotion has taken place in Africa.

Over 600 experts from more than 100 countries participated in the conference, which issued the Nairobi Call to Action.

The Call identified key strategies and commitments urgently needed for closing the implementation gap in health and development through health promotion.

The Nairobi Call to Action reaches out to WHO and other UN-system partners, international development organizations, governments, politicians and policy-makers at all levels, public, civil society, nongovernmental and private organizations and practitioners, and individuals, families, communities, community-based organizations and social networks.

Seen as an essential, effective approach in line with the renewal of primary care as endorsed by the Executive Board of WHO, the Call aligns with the aspirations of Member States, reflects

the vision of the Alma Ata Declaration and supports the recommendations of the WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health.

A key component of the Call is global commitment: to use the untapped potential of health promotion, make health promotion principles integral to the policy and development agenda, and develop effective and sustainable delivery mechanisms.

The proposed strategies and actions are grouped under the five sub-themes of the Conference: building capacity for health promotion, strengthening health systems, partnerships and intersectoral action, community empowerment, and health literacy and behaviours. Actions across the sub-themes complement one another.

Five urgent responsibilities outlined in the call for governments and stakeholders are:

- Strengthening leadership and work forces
- Mainstreaming health promotion
- Empowering communities and individuals
- Enhancing participatory processes
- Building and applying knowledge.

Addressing the conference on behalf of WHO Director-General Dr Margaret Chan, WHO Regional Director for Africa, Dr Luis Sambo, said: “People’s health is affected by different determinants such as income, employment, access to health services, basic education, water and sanitation, housing, gender, culture, lifestyles and other biological, social and economic factors”. Health promotion should play a more prominent role in the implementation of primary care and in responding to the health needs of people, he added.

Also speaking at the conference, Prof Sir Michael Marmot, Chair of the WHO Commission on Social Determinants of health observed that “Social injustice is killing people on a grand scale... We have the resources but do we have the political will?”

**“WE HAVE NO OPTION BUT TO ANSWER THIS CALL AND GET TO WORK”**  
Kenya’s Vice President Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka said at the closing ceremony of the conference.