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# Bridging the gap between evidence and policy: the role of Parliamentarians in advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Side event at the 70th World Health Assembly

Concept note

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides a unique opportunity to set an ambitious, integrated and transformational global agenda for sustainable development that is supported by a strong scientific evidence base.

Incorporating science and evidence into policy and practice is a process of leading from research and its results to decisions and action. To integrate research findings into the policy making process, to communicate research findings to policymakers and having them translated into policy actions is a key challenge world-wide. Furthermore, in the current socio-political situation and given the complexity of varied and numerous sources of information available, this is nowadays even more difficult, especially as regards some areas of public health where misconceptions, false myths and non-evidence based information have been widely disseminated.

The gap between generation of evidence and its use in policy and implementation seems, therefore, to be expanding. Actions need to be taken to correct this and everybody involved in these processes needs to play a role. It is increasingly recognized that the development of evidence-informed health policy and programming is not only a technical process of knowledge exchange and translation, but also poses substantial political challenges that require dialogue between health experts and policy makers. Parliamentarians have a key role to play in bridging this gap and ensuring that health laws and policies and their implementation are continuously informed by robust scientific findings.

The aim of the side event “Bridging the gap between evidence and policy: the role of Parliamentarians in advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” is to facilitate this dialogue between Parliamentarians in their role as lawmakers and the global health community. The World Health Assembly is a unique opportunity for Parliamentarians to get acquainted with current global health priorities and up-to-date scientific evidence, and reflect on how this can be used to guide national political decisions, including on resource allocation. This event also aims at exploring how this interaction has worked so far and how it can be improved, especially in regard to health issues where challenges may arise due to the dissemination of wrong information; such issues include immunization, women’s, children’s and adolescents’ health, including sexual and reproductive health, as well as health aspects of climate change.

Parliamentarians have the authority necessary to promote and safeguard the highest standards of health and well-being for their population and globally, through their roles in legislation, oversight, budgeting, accountability and advocacy.

Living a healthy and fulfilling life is a basic human right fundamental to the achievement of the SDGs, and Parliamentarians are uniquely placed and have a clear mandate to prioritize evidence-based actions and investment decisions that protect this right for the benefit of everybody on this planet, leaving no one behind.