

**Message to International Health Partnership+ (IHP+) Leaders
From Participants in the Fourth Annual IHP+ Country Health Teams Meeting
Nairobi, Kenya, December 2012**

More than 200 representatives of 29 country governments, Development Partners (DPs), and civil society organizations (CSOs) met in Nairobi 11-14 December 2012 to analyze progress through IHP+ in improving development effectiveness in health and to identify obstacles, incentives, and actions required to accelerate progress for better health results. Country teams were a mix of government (47%, mainly MOH but also MOF); national CSOs (23%) and DPs (30%).

Participants very much appreciated the renewed global political momentum behind IHP+. They also emphasized the contributions that IHP+ has made to improving development effectiveness in health since its launch five years ago, despite the continued global economic crisis. The number of countries signing the IHP+ global compact has increased four-fold, indicative of strong and growing country ownership. IHP+ was recognized as having promoted stronger country-led health decision-making, and many countries reported that the partnership had helped them build a coalition of support around their national health plans. IHP+ was credited with putting health ahead of other sectors in implementing development effectiveness principles. It will be the main vehicle for carrying forward the Busan Partnership in health, thereby contributing to achieving the health Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 and the post-2015 development agenda. However, there was also disappointment that progress remains too slow. The 2012 IHP+Results report found that DPs have met only 3 of 12 agreed development effectiveness targets.

Participants identified some critical areas where more and faster progress is needed – and where urgent action is required by leaders at both global and country levels. The key messages were:

- **Strengthen the links between development effectiveness, universal health coverage, and better health results.** Encourage global health initiatives to use the IHP+ approach: putting the development effectiveness principles embodied by IHP+ into practice will enable health programmes and initiatives to achieve the desired results in a more rapid and sustained way. The focus should be on contribution to results rather than attribution.
- **Sustain the explicit emphasis on country leadership and achieve real alignment with national health strategies and plans.** There has been progress but more is needed. In many cases, alignment is still in name only. Countries urged DPs to: participate in the elaboration of their national health sector plans; to then really align with defined priorities; for external as well as domestic expenditures to be recorded in country budgets, and to adjust to country budget and planning cycles. Policy frameworks and tools developed through IHP+, such as the Country Compacts, Joint Assessment of National Strategies (JANS), and common Monitoring and Evaluation frameworks were found to be useful ways to improve policy dialogue, quality and partner confidence, and should be given greater priority and support.
- **Increase use of country procurement and financial management systems.** The IHP+Results Report shows that even country systems that meet international standards are not being used

by all DPs. But participants stressed that country systems will only be strengthened if they are used: the risks of doing so must be managed, but should not be an insurmountable obstacle. Changing policies and practices to align with country systems may require action beyond the health sector, and DPs should actively help to strengthen country systems.

- **Respond more effectively to demands for government and CSO capacity strengthening.** The need for assistance to strengthen government capacity in a wide range of areas was clearly identified, including better quality assessments, better data, financial management and procurement systems, and human resource development. CSOs requested more support to enhance their meaningful engagement in health policy at country and global level. There is a need to be clearer on what this all means in practice, and here IHP+ could play a useful role.
- **Intensify efforts toward greater mutual accountability.** Greater domestic accountability is essential to more effective health development and results, for example through parliaments and CSOs. Participants felt that DPs should be held accountable along with governments during joint annual health reviews. Annual reviews will also be more effective if they include active participation of government stakeholders beyond Ministries of Health, as well as CSOs and the private sector. There was a call for continued global as well as national accountability mechanisms, and to reinforce IHP+ links with the post-Busan monitoring process.
- **Enable greater South-South collaboration.** There is growing country experience on ways of working with multiple partners to achieve better health results. There was a call for action by IHP+ to foster more structured south–south collaboration, including through existing regional and inter-regional platforms.
- **Improve consistency of messages that better alignment gets better results across all levels and forums.** DPs need to ensure greater consistency in their communications between headquarters and country level staff, and also on the boards of different global health initiatives, so that the many DPs and Global Health Initiatives better align with country strategies.

IHP+ has proven an excellent platform for national policy dialogue and engagement among key stakeholders from government, civil society, private sector and international partners, in the health sector and beyond. This platform is well-placed to help countries accelerate their efforts to achieve the health MDGs and to shape the post-2015 agenda for health and development.

Going forward, in countries where IHP+ principles have taken hold, it is urgent that all major players now deepen their efforts to put these principles fully into practice – at national and at sub-national levels. In countries that are not IHP+ signatories, the IHP+ principles and approaches can nevertheless be introduced and should gradually become the normal way of doing business.

At this 5-year mark, participants stressed the importance of having both country and DP leaders send strong messages to their teams to recommit their support for implementing IHP+ principles, and taking concrete steps to address the identified bottlenecks in order to achieve more effective health programs and better health results, to accelerate progress to 2015 and beyond.