

Position Paper for the World Health Organization

The issues before the World Health Organization are: Increasing Access to Medical Care in Developing Countries; Promoting Inter-State Communication within the Medical Communities; and Providing Basic and Primary Health Care Services after Natural Disasters. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland firmly believes that global partnerships are vital to creating a world where primary health care and information are readily available to developing countries. The United Kingdom is fully committed to establishing a communication network that will aid the advancement of research and development in medical communities. The United Kingdom also fully supports humanitarian efforts in preparing the international community for natural disasters and its possible outcomes.

I. Increasing Access to Medical Care in Developing Countries

Throughout the developing world, 1.42 billion individuals cannot afford the necessary medicine to aid their ailments and thus save their lives. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland finds this figure to be deeply disturbing in light of Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states that "everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care." The United Kingdom, taking note of WHA59.2 and the Commission on Intellectual Property Rights, Innovation and Public Health, understands that the need for continued support for research is essential to providing developing countries with the proper information for capacity building and for establishing practical health care systems. However, the United Kingdom realizes that health care systems require the presence of trained medical personnel who can safely administer the necessary medications to promote better health. Thus the United Kingdom, taking note of WHA57.19, is disturbed knowing that highly trained and skilled health personnel from developing countries continue to emigrate at an increasing rate. It is estimated by the year 2015 that the global shortage of health workers will reach 4 million. The United Kingdom further notes with disturbance that many developing countries are not equipped to assess adequately the magnitude of the outflow of their health personnel. This, undoubtedly, is of grave concern to the United Kingdom and to the international community as a whole. The United Kingdom firmly believes, though, that these issues at hand can be lessened by way of communication networks. Recalling E/2009/L.12, the United Kingdom feels that emphasizing the need to strengthen health information systems and the need for the timely transmission of relevant data is essential to providing access to medical care. The United Kingdom believes that multilateral efforts to maintain currently existing global partnerships and to establish new global partnerships also need to be strengthened. The United Kingdom's Tropical Health and Education Trust (THET) is committed to improving health services in developing countries through building long-term capacity and communication partnerships. In addition to THET, the United Kingdom strongly feels that inter-governmental (IGOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) participation from organizations such as the Health Protection Agency (HPA), Healthcare Commission (HCC), and the Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC), is vital in providing information for the purpose of beginning development of health care systems where medical access is available. Reaffirming its commitment to WHA55.14, The United Kingdom *requests* that efforts towards establishing global partnerships, like THET, be initiated. The United Kingdom also *asks* the Member States take measures to provide higher incentives for medical practitioners to continue practicing health care in their countries of origin. The United Kingdom *recommends* that IGOs and NGOs collaborate with local organizations in providing the necessary information for promoting a sustainable future where medical care is available to all. The United Kingdom *further* stresses that in the implementation of such recommendations, all states must be respectful, use, develop and support existing expertise, and recognize the mutual learning benefit that comes from these development partnerships. With this, the United Kingdom believes that the international community can establish adequate health care systems that provide *all* with the medical care to combat health concerns.

II. Promoting Inter-State Communication within the Medical Communities

Since 1991 to 2004, telephone access in the developing world has increased from 2% to 31%; similarly, from 1994 to 2004 internet usage has risen from 0.03% to 6.7%. While the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland recognizes that there has been substantial growth in communication, the United Kingdom is deeply concerned that the disparities existing today pose a threat to the overall progress of the developing world, particularly in those areas of health care and medical access. The United Kingdom recognizes that communication is essential to establishing an adequate foundation for providing basic health care. Thus the United Kingdom affirms the original signing of resolutions A/51/172 and A/65/276 which state that communication for development entails the need to support two-way communication systems that enable dialogue, and that allow communities to speak out, express their aspirations and concerns, and participate in the decisions that relate to their development. Providing information and technology through two-way communication systems strengthens the advancement of developing nations. The United Kingdom, though, is deeply disturbed by the fundamental issue such as funding, education, the lack of human resources and frameworks, which undercut the ability to provide essential health care and medical access. Without the necessary education, human resources, and frameworks, developing Member States lack the skills to adequately and properly provide necessary health care and medical access. The United Kingdom, as a participant of the United Nations Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development as well as the World Summit on Information Systems (WSIS), in accordance with A/C.2/63/SR.16, strongly believes that efforts to develop information and communication (ICT) infrastructure especially the Connect Africa and other initiatives are important to the development of nations, particularly in the areas of health care and medical access. With regards to education and research, the United Kingdom believes that these foundational blocks are indispensable to the progress of developing communication systems between Member States. The United Kingdom funds an increasing amount of biomedical research, which seeks mainly to develop new drugs, vaccines, and medical techniques to improve public health systems which

many developing countries lack. The lack of such health systems has resulted in drastically increasing disease pandemics that have gone untreated. In the last 20 years, HIV/AIDS has become a global epidemic, claiming some 20 million lives. UNAIDS estimates that there are over 40 million people around the world living with HIV/AIDS. Malaria affects 100 countries world-wide, causing 300 to 500 million clinical cases per year, over 80% which are in Africa, and one million deaths per year. To combat these health concerns and prevent the exacerbation of such pandemics, a dynamic and durable global partnership is truly indispensable. The United Kingdom, though, is fully aware that this effort and other initiatives for communication development, such as providing adequate education and conducting necessary research, cannot go unfunded. In observance that an increasing demand for funding exists, the United Kingdom recalls A/60/PV.74, the 74th General Assembly Plenary meeting, which stresses the need to focus on the mobilization of resources through already existing financial mechanisms. The United Kingdom, bearing in mind that while these existing financial mechanisms are of great importance, strongly feels that new sources of funding are vital components towards establishing a necessary communications network. Thus, the United Kingdom *welcomes* the establishment of the Digital Solidarity Fund (DSF) which is a new global organization dedicated exclusively to the fight against the digital divide, created to finance the development of a more equitable information society. The United Kingdom *encourages* and *invites* Member States to actively aid and advocate the establishment of collective bodies similar to the United Kingdom's Information and Communication Technologies for Development (ICT4D) in hopes that such bodies can promote an educated and connected community in which information is readily accessible, especially in the area of health care. The United Kingdom *acknowledges* that efforts from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), such as the BBC World Service Trust and Panos, have been successful in promoting awareness and in initiating programs for development and inter-connectedness. Therefore the United Kingdom *calls* upon Member States to assist and collaborate with NGOs in hopes that both Member States and NGOs can facilitate the establishment of foundations for communication world-wide. With this in mind, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland firmly believes that the international community can create global partnerships for better communication, and that these partnerships can provide a better future for development.

III. Providing Basic and Primary Health Care Services After Natural Disasters

The devastating floods ravaging Pakistan have been noted by the United Nations as the single greatest humanitarian crisis in recent history. Nearly 20 million Pakistanis have been displaced and are now at risk for contracting communicable diseases. In the wake of this event, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland recognizes, in conjunction with A/RES/44/236, that natural disasters have adversely affected the lives of a great number of people. Thus, the United Kingdom has provided 60 million to help current humanitarian efforts in Pakistan. This aid package should be able to provide clean water to 500,000 people, food to 380,000, shelter to 170,000 and health services for up to 2.4 million individuals. However, as stated by the United Kingdom's International Development Secretary to the United Nations, Andrew Mitchell, "The described level of assistance offered by the world community, as of now, is unacceptable. There is a dire need for more help." The United Kingdom recalls A/RES/45/100, which emphasized the concern about the effectiveness of such assistance, which requires an accurate evaluation of needs, efficient preparation of action and effective coordination. The United Kingdom acknowledges that the international community as a whole has improved its capacity to confront natural disasters. However, taking into consideration WHA58.1, the United Kingdom firmly believes that the need to build additional local capacity to assess risks, and to prepare for, and respond to any future catastrophes is undoubtedly necessary. The United Kingdom is deeply concerned that the possible lack of local capacity may give rise to communicable water diseases, such as typhoid fever, cholera, hepatitis A, and vector borne diseases such as malaria, yellow fever, and West Nile fever. The United Kingdom, in accordance with WHA59/20, believes that health-sector involvement in emergency and humanitarian action should be comprehensive. Improved response is needed in a wide range of areas, including management of mass casualties, water and hygiene sanitation, nutrition, and most importantly the control of communicable diseases. The United Kingdom understands that health facilities are lifelines in the aftermath of any natural disaster where large amounts of people need urgent medical treatment. The United Kingdom also recognizes that during a natural disaster, health facilities are vulnerable to an inability to service the overwhelming number of victims who are in need of immediate attention. Thus the United Kingdom reaffirms its commitment to the Global Safe Hospital Campaign which is an example of a complex entity, created by the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), which requests the collaboration of all sectors including financial institutions, in order to make hospitals resilient to complications that may arise from natural disasters. The United Kingdom strongly feels that in order to assist hospitals in efficiently aiding those who have been affected by natural disasters, inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) such as the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as RedR and Oxfam, working alongside local organizations, are crucial and highly desirable agents in ensuring that people affected by disasters have access to food, clean water, emergency shelter and aid as quickly as possible. The United Kingdom, adhering to A/RES/46/182, thus *calls upon* Member States, IGOs, and NGOs to strengthen further and make more effective the collective efforts of the international community in providing humanitarian assistance. The United Kingdom, in accordance with WHA59.22, *recommends* the international community build on the Hyogo Framework for Action (2005-2015), stemming from the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, when providing support to Member States to assess the status of health-sector emergency preparedness, including assessment of the resilience and risk-management capability of hospitals and other key health infrastructures. The United Kingdom *urges* inter-governmental, governmental, and non-governmental organizations, in order to prevent displacement and the spread of communicable diseases, to make their best efforts to engage actively in the collective measures to establish global and regional preparedness plans that integrate risk-reduction planning into the health sector, and to build up capacity to respond to health-related natural crises.