

Keynote Address

By

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at the

Sixth Global Conference on Health Promotion

***Bangkok, Thailand
7-11 August 2005***

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Regional Director for WHO South-East Asia

Honorable Chairperson

Excellencies,

Distinguished participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- I am pleased to have this opportunity to deliver a keynote address at this Conference.
- I am very glad that the Sixth Global Conference on Health Promotion is held once again in this part of the world.
- Ladies and gentlemen, when we travel through the 21st century, we will realize that the theme of the Conference - "Policy and Partnership for Action: Addressing the Determinant of Health" is timely indeed.
- It is almost 20 years since the first Global Conference on health promotion on this topic, many things in the world have changed.

- In this perspective, health promotion has to keep up with these changes.
- The changes include rapid globalization; trade liberalization; fast growing urbanization; and demographic, social and political transitions.
- Equally important are technological advancement; improved speed in communication, and enhanced involvement of other sectors in health development.
- The participants of the Conference have fully addressed these issues during the course of their deliberations.
- The 6th Global Conference on Health Promotion has been convened to meet these global challenges, and to effectively exploit the opportunity to further improve health promotion for better health of population in the 21st century.
- We have seen the intense debate on a number of key subjects, covering policy and strategy relating to the determinants of health, such as health-friendly globalization, new and enhanced partnerships, and sustainable development.

- Health Promotion has been identified as a key strategy to motivate all sectors of society in all countries to firmly commit maximum resources to public health.
- Public health services, which particularly emphasize the overriding priority of health promotion, have become a prerequisite for improved health status of today and tomorrow population.
- If we expect the world population to enjoy a longer and healthier life in this century, we must place the development of health promotion in the right perspective.
- The deliberations of the Conference will conclude with the endorsement of the Bangkok Charter for Health Promotion.
- This Charter aims to guide and engage all concerned stakeholders to reaffirm health promotion as an effective process to enable people to increase control over their own health, make a better decision, a better choice as far as their health is concerned.
- And thereby, their own physical, mental and social wellbeing will be improved.

- Healthier population means ultimately better national security, socially and economically.
- While the concerns are raised on persisting inequalities in health, new opportunities are also arising for improved health promotion in various sectors.
- This is with the effective processes to empower people to engage in self-determined action for the development of individual, family and community health.
- The Charter calls for new and unwavering commitments to health promotion from all sectors of society.
- To ensure equity in health for the attainment of better health for all people, all those sectors must share responsibility for pursuing health promotion activities in all population groups, with special emphasis on the poor and vulnerable.
- On other account, we must join hands to engineer global community in ensuring that globalization and trade liberalization will be much more health-friendly.

- Among others, we must make sure that health promotion will be one of the core responsibilities of all governments worldwide.
- We need to work hard to ensure the induction of health promotion as an integral part of national socioeconomic and political agendas.
- We must provide evidence that health promotion contributes effectively to the country's social and economic development.
- We must also make health as key element of good corporate practices, so that the private sector perceives the necessity to invest in health safely and healthy environment at the work places.
- We have to work together to make all these happen.
- This requires more investment in health, enhanced partnerships, and improved capacity of countries to pursue health development in a more effective manner.
- The capacity that can ensure effective translation of concept, policy and strategy into action and outcome at the grass-root level.

- It is extremely important that countries see actions in health promotion, as justifiable social investments that can contribute effectively to overall development of any nation.
- Therefore, all of us, after returning back to our work, need to redouble our efforts to strengthen health promotion activities whenever opportunity arises.
- WHO in South-East Asia will take forward the processes to stimulate and motivate all countries in the Region, to commit their policies and resources to the implementation of the Bangkok Charter.
- We fully recognize and accept the cross-cutting nature of health promotion, as well as its huge potential to address the major risk factors of morbidity and mortality.
- In particular, we are aware of the social determinants of health, that are influencing personal and group behaviours, as well as environmental conditions of individuals, families, and communities.

- The outcome of this Conference, including the Bangkok Charter, will take countries a long way in reorienting their health promotion strategies to ensure social justice and equity in health care services.
- The outcome of the Conference will promote the assurance of respect for diversity, dignity and human right in the health area.
- Colleagues, In WHO South-East Asia Region, health promotion is a priority programme in all countries.
- Much has been done, and substantial achievements have been obtained in this area in several countries.
- Certainly, many formidable challenges still remain.
- To be really effective, we need new ideas, new approaches and innovations in health promotion strategies and programmes.
- Ladies and gentlemen, we believe that better health promotion will lead to better health status of the entire population, less disease burden, and better economy of any particular country.

- And we consider that the double burden of diseases, communicable and non-communicable, that we, in this Region, are facing today, can be effectively reduced through the implementation of appropriate health promotion programmes.
- WHO in SEAR are in the midst of developing a Regional Strategic Framework, through a consensus building process among the Member States.
- This framework aims particularly at strengthening social mobilization and advocacy activities that link with political commitments and agendas and other supportive environments.
- Interventions in health promotion should reach out to individuals, young and old, men and women, in places where they make daily decisions.
- This is in order to assist them in making informed choices regarding their own health and welfare.
- The individuals must be appropriately equipped with relevant knowledge and evidence for their effective daily decision-making.

- Development of communication strategies that promote and support dialogue, in the matters relating to socio-cultural and gender issues should be encouraged.
- Full participation of intended beneficiaries in the decision-making process in all health matters ought to be ensured at all times.
- Efforts need to be undertaken to address emerging as well as controversial and sensitive issues in a manner that respects rights of the individual and community, including right to cultural beliefs and values.
- Sound health promotion strategy should be considered within specific socio-cultural contexts, which vary from place to place, from country to country.
- Establishment of a structured mechanism for policy and programme planning, monitoring, and evaluation; as well as documentation and dissemination of information shall be an integral part of all health promotion efforts at country and regional levels.

- Ladies and Gentlemen, we have deliberated thoroughly for the last four days, on the health challenges and opportunities for health promotion.
- We pledged ourselves to abide by the commitments and strategies as outlined in the Bangkok Charter.
- The management of change is critical if we have to succeed in responding to the new and emerging demands for better health care and services, and health promotion.
- We should, therefore, unanimously support the principles of the Charter, sustain our commitments to their implementation, work together, and cooperate with each other, in order to achieve the objectives of our noble mission for health and wellbeing of all people of the World.
- Thank you.