



Asia Pacific Observatory on Health Systems and Policies

Newsletter, December 2016

Changes in the APO Secretariat

The Asia Pacific Observatory on Health Systems and Policies (the APO) Secretariat has recently undergone the following changes:

(i) **Relocation:** The Secretariat relocated to New Delhi, India, effective 1 August 2016 and is being hosted by the WHO Office for the South East Asia Region. The Secretariat was hosted by WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific in Manila, Philippines, since its launch in 2011.



(ii) **Leadership:** Dr Nima Asgari joined the APO as its Director on 10 October 2016, succeeding Dr Dale Huntington, who retired in March 2016. Dr Asgari has over 20 years of experience, working in public health development and health systems focusing on strategic planning and coordination of development across multiple partners. He has been with WHO since 2004, setting health system priority agendas in both global and country settings. Prior to joining APO, he coordinated WHO activities across key Thai public health agencies and international partners for non-communicable diseases, health related consequences of trade, health in all policies, and transformative health education.

Upon taking office, Dr Asgari said he looks forward to working with members, research hub networks and partners in achieving the goals of the APO. "I find the intellectual challenge of enhancing the platform for policy discourse in our region enthralling and hope to make effective contribution to that outcome."

The APO Board and STAC Meetings

The 10th and 11th Board Meetings of the APO were held on 28 June 2016 at Seoul, Republic of Korea, and on 3 December 2016 in Hong Kong.



The 10th Board meeting appointed Dr Phusit Prakongsal as the new Chair of the APO Board. He will serve in this capacity from 29 June 2016 to after the 14th Board Meeting in June 2018. Dr Prakongsal is the Chairman of the Budget Subcommittee in Thailand and currently works as a Director of Bureau of International Health (BIH) under the Ministry of Public Health of Thailand. Since Myanmar completed 3 years as a co-opted member of the APO, the Board also invited Myanmar to serve as an observer.

The 11th Board meeting appointed Dr Andrew Cassels, Senior Fellow, Global Health Programme and Dr Piya Hanvoravongchai, Assistant Director, Thailand Research Center for Health Services System, Chulalongkorn University as the members of the Internal Review Panel (IRP) in place of Professor Indrani Gupta, Head of the Health Policy Research Unit, Institute of Economic Growth and Dr Alejandro Herrin, who expressed their wish to discontinue from the panel.

The Board Meetings were preceded by the meeting of the APO's Strategic Technical Advisory Committee (STAC). The STAC reviewed the progress against the APO's work plan.

Upcoming APO Event

Experiences with extending healthcare to the elderly in the Asia Pacific: Lessons from Thailand and Sri Lanka. The APO is organizing a side-event on the experiences with extending healthcare to the elderly in the Asia Pacific at the Prince Mahidol Award Conference (PMAC), an annual international conference on policy-related health issues of global significance, on 30 January 2017. The APO will formally launch its Comparative Country Studies: Health system responses to population ageing and noncommunicable diseases (NCD) in Asia at the session. The study analyzes how Thailand and Sri Lanka tackle the burden of NCD diseases in the elderly.

The aim of the session is to highlight the importance of thinking ahead in planning and identifying solutions to expected challenges in dealing with the elderly; and identify common challenges and share good practices across different health systems on re-orientating their services for the elderly in the Asia Pacific region.

Latest Publications

In 2016, the APO released the following publications:



Fiji Living HiT. *Chapter 6: Principal Health Reforms* of the Fiji Hit was updated to reflect the recent health reforms in the country. Living HiTs are updates on the sections of the published HiTs to capture significant changes in between the complete renewals of a HiT, which takes place approximately every 5 years. These are produced as necessary, enabling comparisons across time, to ensure continued relevance of the HiT to the member countries of the region. The living HiTs are only available online. [Read more.](#)



Health System in Transition (HiT) Policy Notes for Cambodia and Thailand. The HiT Policy Notes provide clear and concise information on selected policy issues confronting a country's progress towards achieving its health sector goals. The Policy Notes series are used to inform evidence-based health policy advocacy and discussions in the country as a follow-up to the release of the HiT. [Read more.](#)



Comparative Country Studies on Strategic Purchasing in China, Indonesia and the Philippines and **Comparative Country Studies on Health Responses to Population Ageing and Noncommunicable Diseases in Asia.** The Comparative Country Studies are country case studies pulled together into edited volumes of papers. The APO supports original research on topics for which the published evidence base within the Asia Pacific region is under-developed. These comparative country studies originate through Study Working Groups, who draft generic protocols, conceptual frameworks that are used to guide individual country case studies. Comparative Country Studies

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