



The G20 at the Leader's Level

## L20 and Preventing Pandemics

### Conjectural Costa Rica Communiqué ideas:

#### Capacity building, Public Health System Strengthening and Security

Addressing the problem of global infectious diseases may be a promising topic for an L20 meeting. A focus on communicable disease is consistent with the current MDG commitments and is the most relevant set of health concerns for all constituencies. The capacity of global public health delivery systems is under stress and actually declining in many developing countries. The communicable disease focus is a good point of entry for addressing cross-sectoral development concern and has a direct impact on economic development and political stability for most countries. Additionally, it provides security for all nations given the potential consequences from the spread of infectious disease.

Despite a serious commitment to global health through the MDGs there is currently a lack of coherence and coordination as well as poor scales of economy at the international level. Poor countries cannot control epidemics on their own and the international system could be better equipped to provide for global security. Through capacity building and system strengthening the L20 leaders could provide the necessary political leadership to bring significant improvement to the situation. Such an approach may not require incremental financial commitments so long as priorities are established and corresponding mechanisms are supported. A true partnership between industrialized countries and key developing countries is imperative to the success of this agenda.

#### PREMISES

- Supporting efforts for achieving health related MDGs and preventing the spread of infectious disease are an immediate priority;
- Surveillance of the spread of infectious diseases and the building of capacities to address them are the best defense;
- International institutions provide the best mechanism to manage initiatives dealing with global infectious disease. They must be capable of rationalizing multilateral, bilateral and NGO efforts as well as encourage joint learning;
- Catalyzing action beyond the health sector is necessary; technical assistance must be comprehensive and not create obstacles that ultimately inhibit improvements in health;
- Reporting of problems such as emerging pandemics is critical and must be encouraged at the international level;
- Maintaining human resources in poor countries to assist with preventing the spread of infectious diseases will ensure that development assistance is effectively used and is a social and economic benefit to both developing and developed countries;
- A system to encourage innovation in vaccine development would be valuable and must be achieved in conjunction with the provision of access to medicines;

- There is congruence between a large set of counter bioterrorism initiatives and public health initiatives to increase the capacity of poor countries to provide health services and to remedy infectious disease.

## Potential L20 Communiqué Elements

### **Initiatives to detect, prevent, control and treat infectious diseases**

- Leaders commit to strengthening global health security by providing strategic support for the WHO's Global Outbreak and Alert Response Network and creating an international insurance fund to assist with and thus encourage the reporting of national outbreaks
- Create a 'Global Health Cooperation Compact' to: streamline existing assistance arrangements to reduce current inefficiencies and transaction costs (ie. identifying what to do less of); reinforce support for existing good health assistance channels (ie. what to do more of); and support new channels of international partnership and delivery (what additional things to do)
- Instruct the IMF and the World Bank to relax strictures that have negative impacts on health sectors
- Organize a Global Health Workforce Summit with the WHO and the ILO to address the migration of skilled health professionals from the developing to the developed world
- Instruct the WTO and the WHO to create trade incentives for countries that significantly and verifiably improve their citizens' health
- Direct trade ministers to reduce tariffs and other trade barriers on life-saving and health promoting goods and services
- Build technological capacity and reduce global disparities in access to health technologies and knowledge by: creating a Global E-Health Library; instructing Finance Ministers to work with national legislators, the World Bank, private enterprise, and NGOs to create a plan for increasing global E-health access and utilization; and creating mechanisms to foster capacity building in developing countries
- Create an L20 Vaccine Task Force that would pool resources and knowledge for transnational virtual drug or vaccine development while decreasing the risks and inefficiencies of individual countries following independent vaccine programs
- Support and expand the efforts in South-South joint learning, such as the Brazil initiative of domestic production of generic HIV drugs