



World Federation of Public Health Associations

800 I Street, NW, Washington DC 20001-3170 USA / Tel: +1.202.777.2486 Fax: +1.202.777.2533

WFPHA Resolution on Global Public Health Leadership

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Proposed by the Congolese Society for Public and Community Health

The World Federation of Public Health Associations (WFPHA) at its annual meeting of 19 April 2004 in Brighton resolves that "Public Health is an art and a science; it is also a movement dedicated to the equitable improvement of health and well-being (of communities with their full participation). First and foremost, Public Health leaders must be catalysts for the Public Health movement. Individually and collectively around the world, Public Health leaders must maintain and strengthen their roles and capacities as advocates for Public Health¹."

Key public health challenges have a global dimension:

- to promote the Human Rights;
- to reduce the Burden of Disease;
- to guaranty appropriate nutrition;
- to educate on all aspects of health promotion;
- to protect the environment;
- to achieve worldwide access to essential drugs at reasonable cost.

The diversity of challenges Public Health is faced with, underlines the urgency to create effective partnership among health professionals. This is especially important in countries where the traditional top down execution of public health is not yet balanced by a bottom up approach supported by a professional network as significant for the New Public Health. To overcome the inherited old-fashioned practices of paternalism public health professionals have to rely on international encouragement and moral support if the community is to become the focus of social and public health action. The strengthening of national and international public health networks is a precondition "to promote global health and contribute to the achievement of equity in health between and within countries of the world²." Because the challenges emerging and re-emerging in public health are increasingly global, a global response is requested and therefore plural participation. The establishment of powerful integrative national public health associations or public health forums is a key strategic element.

However, most of the public health problems of today are characterized by complexity and lack of straight-forward solutions. Therefore a high degree of expertise - theoretical knowledge as well as practical experience - is essential in order to design and execute appropriate interventions. To ensure leadership and supportive guidance in this process, the global public health community needs a clear vision to be communicated and shared. The promotion of the populations' health through prevention, education and health care reform cannot become sustainable without public health training of excellence at all levels of the cadre. Schools of Public Health as well as other institutional formats like e.g. the creation of KPPH-Centers (Know and Practice Public Health) in some African countries are mandatory in order to stabilize a high quality, continuous and up to date training for public health professionals.

Therefore - as a national and global priority - WFPHA in line with the resolutions issued earlier strongly recommends the establishment of national professional organizations and of training institutions for public health professionals in line with the principles and the mission laid out above and in all countries where this has not been the case so-far.

1) WFPHA, Challenges for Public Health at the Dawn of the 21st Century- A Call To Action, 9th International Congress, Beijing, China, 6 September 2000

2) International Union for Health Promotion and Education (IUHPE), volume IX/2.2002