



NEWS RELEASE

Experts spotlight the #MeToo movement as critical to achieving good health as part of the SDGs

At the Fifth Global Symposium for Health Systems Research (HSR2018) in Liverpool last week, delegates made a strong plea for action to address the ‘power and privilege’ that continues to undermine health systems in ensuring health and wellbeing of citizens and communities.

Outgoing chair of Health Systems Global, Kabir Sheikh, stated that: “The #MeToo movement has shown us that even the most privileged among women have not been spared from cultures of sexual harassment and exploitation. This is the tip of the iceberg, and we need to go deeper to understand and tackle the true extent of gender-based discrimination and violence, especially on the wellbeing of poor women with less recourse to systems of accountability”

Asha George, incoming Chair of Health Systems Global, said: “Emerging platforms for social voice and leverage, including social media, have demonstrated how those in positions of power can be held to account for their actions. Such platforms merit consideration and scrutiny as to how they can contribute to universal health coverage and the sustainable development goals (SDGs)”.

The theme of ‘[Advancing health systems for all in a SDG era](#)’ was addressed throughout all the sessions at the Symposium. [Dr Soumya Swaminathan, Deputy Director General of the World Health Organization, said:](#) “in health systems we must keep asking the question, how is what we are going to do going to benefit the people most in need and applying the equity lens is the only way we can make progress towards the SDGs”.

The event commemorated anniversaries of two significant global health events - the Alma Ata declaration for primary health care and the birth of the UK National Health Service (NHS). Ahead of the fortieth anniversary event for the Alma Ata declaration, the [Global Conference on Primary Health Care](#), the [Symposium Liverpool Statement \(pdf\)](#) called on leaders, donors and the research community to broaden and expand foreign and domestic investment in the field of health policy and systems research (HPSR) and set agendas that are open to innovation and includes marginalised voices.

[Alistair Burt, UK MP and minister for international development](#) said “one of the National Health Service’s fundamental values is equitable access, care that is free at the point of use so that no one is left behind. Leave no one behind is a core theme of the Symposium and we all need to learn from each other how we can uphold this principle”.

The Symposium took place between 8 and 12 October in Liverpool, ACC Conference Centre, and is [hosted by Health Systems Global with co-sponsors](#) the Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research, World Health Organization (WHO) and a consortium of UK organisations led by the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine.

ENDS.

For further information on the Symposium or to request an interview with Professor Asha George (Chair, HSG), please contact Vivienne Benson v.benson@ids.ac.uk +44(0)7789013453

Notes to Editors

- What is HSR2018? - [Health Systems Global](#) organizes a symposium every two years to bring together its members with the broad range of players involved in health systems and policy research. The focus of the Fifth Global Symposium on Health Systems Research (HSR2018) in Liverpool between 8-12 October was on advancing health systems for all in the sustainable development goals (SDGs) era. The next Symposium will be hosted in Dubai on 8-12 November 2020.
- Universal health coverage (UHC) means that all individuals and communities receive the health services they need without suffering financial hardship. It includes the full spectrum of essential, quality health services, from health promotion to prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and palliative care. (WHO, 2017)
- The Alma-Ata Declaration in 1978 was the first to make primary health care the main strategy to achieve the World Health Organization's goal of health for all. The Declaration 2.0 to be discussed in October is expected to renew the emphasis on primary care as the main driver of people-centred health systems leading to UHC. (The Lancet, 2018)
- On 25 September 2015, countries adopted the sustainable development goals to end poverty, to protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all. Each goal has specific targets to be achieved by 2030. (UN, 2015)
- On 25-26 October 2018, the world will come together in Astana, Kazakhstan, at the [Global Conference on Primary Health Care](#) to renew a commitment to primary health care to achieve universal health coverage and the Sustainable Development Goals. The Conference will be held at the Palace of Independence and is co-hosted by the Government of Kazakhstan, WHO and UNICEF.
- A health system is the people, institutions and resources, arranged together in accordance with established policies, to improve the health of a population.
- [Health policy and systems research \(HPSR\)](#) is an emerging field that seeks to understand and improve how societies organize themselves in achieving collective health goals, and how different actors interact in the policy and implementation processes to contribute to health policy outcomes.
- 2018 is the fortieth anniversary of the Alma Ata declaration. The Alma Ata vision of 'Health for All' remains as compelling today as it was in 1978, but the world has changed. Despite many improvements, there remain extraordinary challenges for health equity and social inclusion, such as demographic and disease transitions, conflicts and the mass migration of people, pluralistic health systems and markets, and climate change.
- [Health Systems Global \(HSG\)](#) is the first international membership-based organization fully dedicated to promoting health systems research and knowledge translation. It is driven by a diverse, global membership of researchers, decision-makers and practitioners.