



## WHEC UPDATE

Briefings of worldwide activity of Women's Health and Education Center (WHEC)

March 2009; Vol. 4, No. 3

We want to avoid creating a society of information "haves" and "have-nots". The most important step we can take to ensure universal service is to adopt policies that result in the lower prices for everyone....But we will still need a regulatory safety net to make sure almost everyone can benefit. Democracy is multidimensional and is an abstract concept – can be difficult to measure. Democracy is a dependent variable. Democratic values are based principally on the average of two measures: a ranking of political rights and one of civil liberties. Governance of the Internet – or, more generally, its leadership and shaping influence – has also tended to be largely American. It has become more international in recent years, and international aspects are now reflected in the non-governmental organizations and commercial firms. As social, political, and legal issues beyond the scope and expertise of the existing bodies have arisen, specialized multinational organizations with more political connections have exercised their influence; the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), for example, has become an important forum for discussions and treaties governing digital copyright. The lack of centralized leadership for the Internet may contribute to the perception that it is a home to anarchy, but from the practical perspective the Internet works pretty well. E-mail arrives. Web-pages work with most browsers. Electronic commerce is starting to move forward.

We tend to overlay deep social problems with technical systems. We have these deep social chasms within. One way in which they manifest themselves is with technical literacy. But technical literacy is not the social chasm. I think there is a lot of wind around providing access, but unless you address the underlying problem, I do not know that installing free computers in the local libraries will change much. The issue of content control has also loomed. Today, there are social mechanisms to provide Internet access special rates to people who can barely afford telephones and energy utilities. As the portable telephone and computer evolve into one portable information appliance, people might become so dependent on the Internet for information that access will be essential for social participation, if not for simply getting through the day. It is indeed a pleasure to see **WomensHealthSection.com** is emerging as a powerful force for social action and change. Nations distinguish between themselves and other nations and enforce rules at borders. The Internet – like other communication and transportation technologies – unsettles and challenges our distinctions about identity. The deeper question will remain: How do the haves and the taxpayers see the poor and unfortunate, and how will they choose to treat them in and out of cyberspace?

Computers and Democracy

**Rita Luthra, MD**

## Your Questions, Our Reply:

Why should we care about Globalization?

**Globalization:** it is an inevitable phenomenon in human history that's been bringing the world closer through the exchange of goods and products, information, knowledge and culture. But over the last few decades, the pace of this global integration has become much faster and dramatic because of unprecedented advancements in technology, communications, science, transport and industry. Globalization has sparked one of the most highly charged debates of the past decade. When people criticize the effects of globalization, they generally refer to economic integration. Economic integration occurs when countries lower barriers such as import tariffs and open their economies up to investment and trade with the rest of the world. These critics complain that inequalities in the current global trading system hurt developing countries at the expense of developed countries. International organizations, such as the World Bank, bilateral aid agencies and NGOs, work with developing countries to establish this foundation to help them prepare for global integration. When governments don't provide this foundation and basic services, poor people can't take advantage of opportunities that globalization offers and are left behind. It is equally important that the government governs well. If a country's government is corrupt and incompetent, outside agencies really won't be able to make a difference.

One of our goals is to make our readers and associates help to learn about the world and current events. Learn how much money your government gives through bilateral and multilateral assistance and volunteer to help those in need. Working together is the best response to global health issues.

## About NGO Association with the UN:

UN Partner on Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)  
*A Gateway to the UN System's Work on MDGs*

**UN DESA – UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs**  
Office for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination (OESC)

The Office provides substantive support to:

- The [Economic and Social Council](#) including through:
  1. Supporting the Council's function of providing system-wide guidance , including in the area of integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits;
  2. Supporting the Council's oversight and coordination of its subsidiary bodies, with a view to achieving improved harmonization of their agendas and work programs, and on the coordination of the implementation of declarations, strategies and programs of action in the economic and social fields adopted by major United Nations conferences and summits;
- The General Assembly (GA), including on the follow-up to the Agenda for Development and Second Committee;
- The non-governmental organizations (NGO) in consultative status with the Council in the economic and social fields.

The Office also:

- Provides substantive support to the intergovernmental process on restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields;
- Prepares assessments of the performance and evaluates the impact of the United Nations system's operational activities, in accordance with the mandates established by the triennial comprehensive policy reviews of the GA;

- Facilitates substantive links between the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the General Assembly and the United Nations system through the and the United Nations Development Group(UNDG);
- Promotes interaction between the Council and the United Nations System Chief Executive Board for Coordination (CEB), as well as between the governing bodies of organizations of the system.

## **Collaboration with World Health Organization (WHO):**

Historical Overview: From the Safe Motherhood Initiative to Making Pregnancy Safer

The Department of Making Pregnancy Safer (MPS) was established in January 2005 to strengthen WHO's capacity to support countries' efforts to improve maternal and newborn health and reduce maternal, perinatal and newborn mortality. The Department aims at reinforcing advocacy, technical support, monitoring and evaluation, and partnerships in countries to ensure that WHO can provide the most up-to-date information and guidance on maternal and newborn health. More than 120 dedicated staff worldwide are working for the Department. The majority of the activities are carried out by more than 80 staff located in over 75 country offices. The remainder is working in one of the WHO's six regional offices, including three sub-regional offices in sub-Saharan Africa, and at its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. WHO's activities to improve maternal and newborn health started long before the creation of the Department of Making Pregnancy Safer. The Safer Motherhood Initiative launched in 1987 joined strong international efforts to address maternal mortality. In the course of this initiative, some countries had made great progress in reducing the mortality of mothers and their newborns. In many other countries, however, the situation had remained unchanged. Recognizing the need for further progress, WHO launched the Making Pregnancy Safer Initiative in 2000. With this programme, WHO started to focus on the health sector and made a special effort to contribute to the improvement of maternal, perinatal and newborn health. The 2005 creation of MPS as a separate department within WHO reflects the larger Organization's recognition of the need to accelerate the reduction of maternal and newborn mortality and to ensure access to skilled attendance and the highest attainable standards of health to all women and babies. Mission and Vision: [http://www.who.int/making\\_pregnancy\\_safer/about/mission/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/making_pregnancy_safer/about/mission/en/index.html)

**Bulletin of the World Health Organization; Volume 87, Number 3, March 2009, 161-244 [Table of contents](#)**

## **Collaboration with UN University (UNU):**

UNU-WIDER (World Institute for Development Economics Research) *Expert Series on Health Economics*:

The Financial Crisis of 2008 and the Developing Countries

Following the financial crisis that broke in the US and other Western economies in late 2008, there is now serious concern about its impact on the developing countries. The world media almost daily reports scenarios of gloom and doom, with many predicting a deep global recession. This paper critically discusses this and concludes that as far as the developing countries are concerned, a bit more optimism may be warranted. Although without doubt there are particular countries that will be adversely affected, there will also be countries that may be less affected, may avoid recession, and may recover sooner than expected. Six major reasons for this conclusion are discussed. Without this resilience in the developing world, prospects for the world's richer countries would be much bleaker. Finally, some options available to the developing countries for minimizing the impact of the crisis are discussed. The crisis accentuates the urgent need for accelerating financial development in developing countries, both through domestic

financial deepening, domestic resource mobilization, and reform of the international financial system.

Indeed, the crisis that by October 2008 had erased around US\$25 trillion from the value of stock markets seems largely to have been unexpected. Partly this was because it came on the heels of a seven-year period of high growth and originated in the USA; many had expected a global slowdown to start in the emerging markets. Both the initial destruction of financial wealth as well as the psychological shock of seeing many elite Wall Street firms on their knees, prompted numerous commentators to initially raise the specter of the great depression. Although not the great depression, it is indeed true that the world is staggering from financial to economic crisis as the US, EU, Japan and other high-income economies entered the recession at the end of 2008. Having decimated Wall Street and then crippled Main Street, the financial crisis seems like a hurricane about to sweep across the developing world. As Evans and Maxwell (2008) suggest, it may be time for these countries 'to start nailing shutters on the windows'. This paper investigates the consequences of the 2008 financial crisis on the developing countries. It is structured as follows. Section 2 provides a brief outline of the causes of the crisis. This is the necessary background for understanding the likely impact and the required responses. The remainder of the paper examines the likely magnitude and duration of the crisis, identifying the channels through it will exert its impact on developing countries. In this regard the main conclusion is more optimistic of the prospects faced by the developing world, although at the time of writing, many uncertainties remain. As discussed in section 3, there are at least six major reasons for a more upbeat prognosis for developing countries. These are that (i) the epicenter of the crisis is in the developed countries, not the developing world as in many of the previous crises; (ii) developing-country financial sectors have not been as directly affected; (iii) there has been a measure of decoupling of growth rates between developing and developed countries in recent years; (iv) many developing-country economies are currently quite resilient as a result of good growth, better policies and having learned lessons during the 1998 Asian crisis; (v) the largest emerging markets, China and India, will continue to grow, albeit a bit slower; and (vi) the extent of fiscal expansion programs now being undertaken is likely to cushion the extent and duration of growth declines. Section 4 discusses the options for developing countries to minimize the impact of the crisis, arguing that the crisis makes it imperative to accelerate financial development in developing countries through both domestic financial deepening and reform of the international financial system. Section 5 concludes by commenting on some of the shortcomings in the current responses of the developed countries, referring to the dangers of moral hazard, the continued availability of cheap credit, and of the disturbingly widening inequalities in wealth. In the context of a world where the 'poor are bailing out the rich' and the reckless are rewarded at the expense of the thrifty, these dangers should not be dismissed lightly.

Publisher: UNU-WIDER; Series: WIDER Discussion Paper 2009/01; Author: Wim Naudé

Sponsor: UNU-WIDER gratefully acknowledges the financial contribution to the project by the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and the financial contributions to the research programme by the governments of Denmark (Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Finland (Ministry for Foreign Affairs), Norway (Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Sweden (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency—Sida) and the United Kingdom (Department for International Development).

*(Details of the paper can be accessed from the link of UNU-WIDER on CME Page of WomensHealthSection.com)*

## **Universal Declaration of Human Rights:**

*All human beings are born with equal and inalienable rights and fundamental freedoms.  
(Continued)*

### **Article 1**

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

### **Article 2**

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

### **Article 3**

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

*To be continued.....*

## **Top Two Articles Accessed in February 2009:**

1. Thromboembolism in Pregnancy;  
<http://www.womenshealthsection.com/content/obs/obs011.php3>  
WHEC Publications. Special thanks to the Editorial Board for compiling for our readers and the physicians who reviewed the bulletin.
2. The Ethical Concept of the Fetus as a Patient;  
<http://www.womenshealthsection.com/content/obs/obs019.php3>  
Authors: Dr. Frank A. Chervenak, Given Foundation Professor and Chairman, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Weill Medical College of Cornell University, New York, New York (USA) and Dr. Laurence B. McCullough, PhD, Professor of Medicine and Medical Ethics, Associate Director for Education Center for Medical Ethics and Health Policy, Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, Texas (USA)

## **From Editor's Desk:**

### **e – DISCUSSION ON GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH**

A moderated e-discussion on Global Public Health, jointly organized by the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and UNDP, was held from 29 January to 26 February 2009 as part of the preparatory process for the ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review (AMR). Women's Health and Education Center (WHEC) had participated in it. It was indeed an enriching experience. Details:

### **Part I Strengthening health systems (29 January – 11 February)**

1. How can we overcome health inequities, achieve universal coverage and renew primary health care (PHC)? What are examples of successes toward universal coverage that

- could be replicated or scaled up? How can countries learn from each other's experience in this?
2. What steps can both developed and developing country governments take to overcome the shortage of health care workers?
  3. What can be done to limit the damage and create opportunities through increased migration of health professionals? What specific initiatives can the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) launch in July 2009?

[Responses in full \(part I\)](#)

## **Part II Emerging and future health challenges (12 – 26 February)**

4. What are the essential elements of national strategies to address the growing magnitude of non-communicable diseases (cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes) and their modifiable risk factors (tobacco use, unhealthy diets, physical inactivity and harmful use of alcohol) and social determinants? What sectors besides the health sector must be involved in designing and implementing the strategies? How can we raise the priority accorded to non-communicable diseases in development work at global and national level?
5. In the wake of the financial crisis, how can we maintain and enhance the favorable policy and resource trends for global health of the recent past? How can we better define the roles different stakeholders can play, including through collaborative intersectoral efforts, towards the achievement of public health goals?
6. What further innovations should be incorporated into global health partnerships and collaborative arrangements to improve their performance, reduce transaction costs and increase synergy of action aligned to country priorities? What other innovative ways of working can be considered that strive for greater coordination and collaboration of all actors in health?

[Responses in full \(part II\)](#)

The discussion presented an opportunity for the broader development community, in particular those working at the country level, to provide a valuable contribution to the United Nations intergovernmental process that takes place through the ECOSOC family of organizations. The ideas and recommendations collected may be considered for inclusion in the report of the Secretary-General on the AMR, and will be made widely available on the internet and at ECOSOC's substantive session in July 2009. Recommendations will help to strengthen the efforts of Member States to address some of the most significant global public health challenges and to provide the intergovernmental process -- especially the Economic and Social Council -- with some constructive input on efforts it can undertake to reduce inequities and improve health and human security worldwide.

## **Special Thanks:**

WHEC thanks Barbara Meehan, Treasurer of Women's Health and Education Organization, Inc. / eclecTechs for her priceless support, friendship, skilled work and advice to make this project and program a success. It is indeed our pleasure and privilege to work with you. Thanks again.

## **Words of Wisdom:**

Praise is well, blame is well; but affection is the final and most precious reward that any man can win.

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*Monthly newsletter of WHEC designed to keep you informed on the latest UN and NGO activities*