

GLOBAL AND REGIONAL CHALLENGES

Context facing the health sector at the beginning of the 21st century

- Growing poverty, inequity, and social exclusion
- Rising unemployment and growth of the informal economy
- Growing population and urban development; aging of the population
- High economic and social instability
- Weakening of governance
- Exponential advances in scientific knowledge and health technologies
- Mixed, complex epidemiological profile
- Poor performance and low resolution capacity of the health services

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Millennium Declaration of the United Nations established objectives and measurable goals with specific timetables in order to combat poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation, and discrimination against woman, with emphasis on human rights, good government, and democracy. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as they are now called, are:

Objetivo 1: **Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger**

Objetivo 2: **Achieve universal primary education**

Objetivo 3: **Promote gender equality and empower women**

Objetivo 4: **Reduce infant mortality**

Objetivo 5: **Improve maternal health**

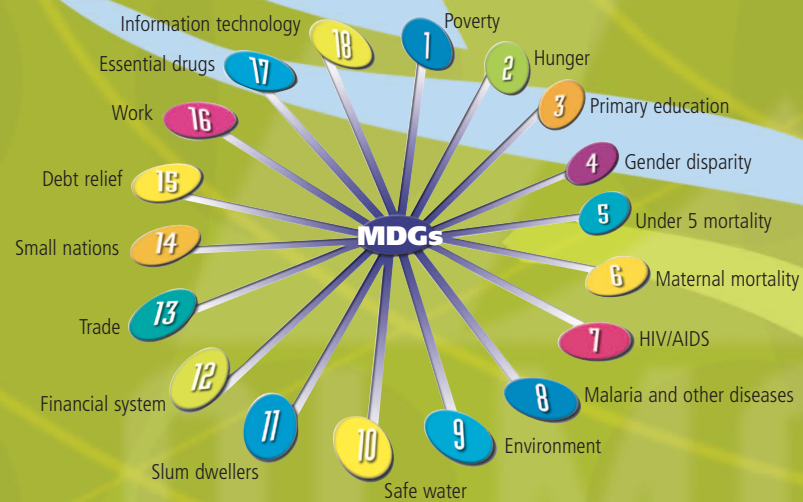
Objetivo 6: **Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases**

Objetivo 7: **Ensure environmental sustainability**

Objetivo 8: **Develop a global partnership for development**

The MDGs have put investing in the health of populations at the center of the development agenda for the 21st century.

The 18 MDGs can be viewed as determinants with a high impact on health:



They represent a call to establish a more equitable world, acknowledge the urgency and legitimacy of reducing poverty, and fight inequalities in health, as well as a voice for neglected, disadvantaged and excluded groups and their interests.

Strategies for achieving these objectives should be based on integrated intersectoral action and reducing gaps.



MDGs IN THE AMERICAS

The Brasilia Declaration, signed in November 2003 by heads of state, senior officials, and representatives of civil society and the private sector, promoted political consensus on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean.

PRIMARY HEALTH CARE AND HEALTH FOR ALL

Primary Health Care (PHC)¹ is essential health care based on practical, scientifically sound, and socially acceptable methods and technologies made universally accessible to individuals and families in the community through their full participation and at a cost that the community and country can afford to maintain at every stage of their development in the spirit of self-reliance and self-determination. It forms an integral part of the country's health system, of which it is the central function and main focus, and of the overall social and economic development of the community. It is the first level of contact of individuals, the family, and the community with the national health system, bringing health care as close as possible to where people live and work, and it constitutes the first element of a continuing health care process.

Basic Principles of PHC

- Universal accessibility and coverage on the basis of need
- Community and individual participation and self-reliance
- Intersectoral action for health
- Appropriate technology and cost-effectiveness in relation to the available resources

Health for All (HFA)² is a powerful vision, based on social justice, to enable every individual to achieve a socially and economically productive life. Primary Health Care is a way of organizing health systems to guarantee the achievement of the goal in accordance with the political, socioeconomic, and health conditions of each country.

PRIMARY HEALTH CARE IN THE AMERICAS

1. The Region had pioneering experiences in PHC prior to the Declaration of Alma-Ata (1978).
2. The response to the mandate of Alma-Ata in the Region has had varied levels of development and intensity.
3. PHC became the most important platform of health policy in the Americas between the 1970s and 1980s.
4. **Contributions:**
 - Expansion of coverage to rural and marginal urban areas through priority programs and the strengthening of first level care.
 - Human resources development: changes in public health practices and contents.
 - Shift in the models of care toward comprehensive care with a geographic and family orientation.
 - Social and community participation and intersectoral coordination as strategic components of changes in health.
 - Demedicalization of public health and revindication of the anticipatory nature of public health action with the prioritization of health promotion.
 - Importance of health policy-making and the role of health as an element of social integration, democratic governance, and sustainable development.

¹ Primary Health Care Concepts and Challenges in a Changing World: Alma-Ata Revisited. WHO/SHS/CC/94.2.

² Pan American Health Organization 1998, Technical Report OPS/DAP/98.3.39

5. Pending Issues

- PHC and the principles of health promotion have not been sufficiently implemented in order to effectively reorient health care models and secure more effective community participation.
- Poor response capacity at the primary care level and lack of effective transformation of the health system as a whole persist.
- The changes in the demographic and epidemiological profiles of populations have been greater than anticipated.
- There is a need for interventions explicitly designed to reduce inequalities in health and achieve equity in health at the hemispheric level.
- The need for research that provides evidence to guide interventions must be addressed more vigorously.

Dimensions of the PHC Challenge

Ethical dimension:

- Health: a human and public right
- Social justice: health for all
- Equity in health: the Millennium Development Goals
- Solidarity and international cooperation

Political dimension:

- Health as an opportunity for building citizenship
- Steering role of the state
- Intersectoral approach in public policy
- Citizen participation, protagonism, and social control

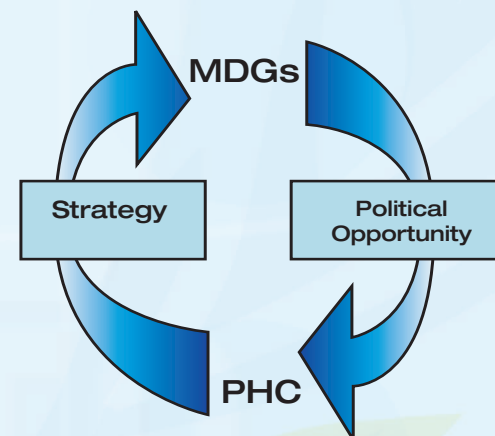
Systemic dimension:

- Reorientation of services, with health promotion as an important criterion.
- Comprehensive care models
- Quality of care
- Sustainability of health systems and health interventions.

THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

The global consensus that the MDGs represent and the key position they assign to health and its role in development represent a significant political opportunity for the renewal of Health for All and the Primary Health Care approach in the Americas.

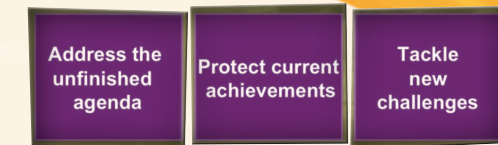
Primary Health Care is one of the basic strategies for attaining the MDGs, serving as a platform for strengthening health systems and emphasizing equity, a shift from vertical to horizontal approaches at the point of service, and the strengthening of intersectoral collaboration and social participation in health.



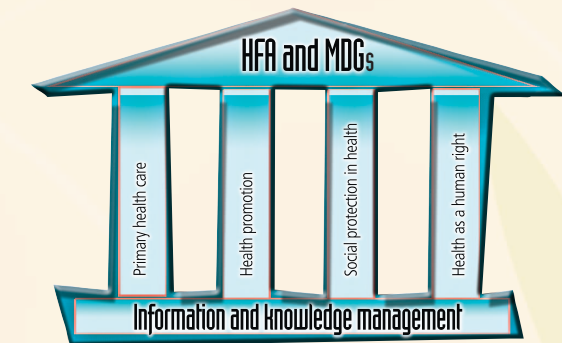
- Strengthens all components of the National Health Systems, especially those related to the sustainability of health systems
- Prevents an exclusively programmatic (vertical) approach to services delivery
- Focuses on equity and inequity

FUTURE PATH AND PRIORITIES OF PAHO

PAHO Framework for Action in the 21st Century



Policy Framework for PAHO/WHO Technical Cooperation



Resolution CE134.R8 of the Executive Committee proposed that the 45th Directing Council recognize the MDGs as a health priority for the Region, strengthen the political commitment to them, and devise strategies for attaining them as part of the national health development plans of the countries of the Region.

Resolution CD44.R6 of the 44th Directing Council urged the organization to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Alma-Ata and to organize a regional consultation to define future strategic and programmatic orientations in Primary Health Care, which would include the preparation of a NEW REGIONAL DECLARATION that, like the Declaration of Alma-Ata, proposes policies and strategies to improve the health status of our peoples.

New Regional Declaration on Primary Health Care

- Declaration: a new milestone and regional reference.
- Renewed institutional position of PAHO/WHO regarding PHC
- Conceptual and practical renewal of PHC based on the lessons learned over the past 25 years, the Millennium Development Goals, and the preservation of the pluralistic visions of PHC found in the Region.