

Public and global engagement with global health

Global health is widely regarded as being grounded in public and global engagement. But much of the process of global health is dominated by Northern institutions, expert groups, think-tanks, high-level meetings, and the like. Indeed, the exponential growth of global health in the past decade may soon turn into terminal decline unless truly global and broad-based ownership of the concept can be achieved.¹

In April, 2013, a public consultation called Global Health Beyond 2015 was organised by the Swedish Society of Medicine.² More than 1000 participants came together in Stockholm's Waterfront Centre for a packed day's programme; as many people also participated remotely via social media. The next day, a smaller group of around 200 students and young professionals continued to deliberate with opinion leaders. They are the first generation that has grown up in a truly global environment. They are passionate about safeguarding

the planet, and not least the health of its growing population, for their future and their children's future. Under an overall umbrella of poverty and inequality, the meeting concentrated on three issues that are driving the changing global context of health: the underlying determinants of health, non-communicable diseases, and climate change.³

Scandinavians and their governments have a long tradition of engaging with world affairs, and that underlies the public engagement evident as one dimension of this process. But Scandinavia is also part of the globe, and hence its health community takes its role in global health seriously. One of the aims of this process was to produce a Stockholm Declaration for Global Health out of all the interactions (panel). We hope that this Declaration will serve as an unofficial but influential framework within which Scandinavia, and other countries, can engage fruitfully with global health.

The Declaration provides an important opportunity to promote equitable global health and development by leading bilateral and multilateral initiatives, including at the UN, and strengthening research capacity globally among the coming generations. The Swedish Society of Medicine commits to follow the Declaration by adopting an ongoing agenda to promote global healthy living through fairness and equity, on an intergenerational and multidisciplinary basis. In the global perspective, we look forward to other responses to this Declaration from around the world that will contribute to widening the ownership of global health conceptually and geographically.

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- 2 Horton R. Offline: The Stockholm Syndrome. *Lancet* 2013; **381**: 1260
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The Stockholm Declaration for Global Health

To promote social justice globally, and to safeguard the wellbeing of current and future generations, the Stockholm Declaration for Global Health urges governments, the global health community, schools and universities, development agencies, donors, policy makers, research funding agencies, the business sector and civil society to act urgently on existing evidence in the following areas:

Linking on-going agendas with new agendas

Ensure that the post-2015 development agenda builds on current MDGs, is universal and incorporates emerging challenges. These include socioeconomic and gender inequalities, non-communicable diseases (such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer, and chronic respiratory disease), and climate change (including threats to food and water security).

Creating stronger leadership and accountability so that health is at the centre of development

Ensure that health is a high-profile unifying theme in the post-2015 development agenda, positioned to act as a catalyst for human rights and global solidarity; and that appropriate accountability mechanisms and professional leadership for global and national commitments are established.

Building capacity and investing in health

Invest in leadership for global health through education from primary school to university, and enable public empowerment by bringing together networks for intersectoral multidisciplinary research and action on global health.

Exploiting opportunities and synergies

Identify and exploit opportunities for applying effective democratic principles to on-going health agendas (including maternal, child, and mental health), violence, climate change, and other emerging challenges, thus bringing sustainable social, ecological, and economic short-term and long-term returns for both public and private sectors. Pursue synergies such as health and climate co-benefits that bring multiple gains.