



Improving health and supporting sustainable development by connecting with non-health actors

News release

EuroHealthNet, the European Partnership for health, equity, and wellbeing is contributing to the 67th session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe taking place this week in Budapest, Hungary.

Here, EuroHealthNet welcomes the WHO Roadmap to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and urges the WHO and health ministries towards stronger collaboration with non-health actors on the underlying causes of ill-health. This action must address all determinants of health- including commercial, and involve collaboration across interests and fostering synergies.

A [written statement](#) and two oral statements have been provided for the meeting.

Today's society is both unsustainable and unfair. Changes in our living patterns are needed in order to mitigate damage to ecosystems, pollution, and depletion of natural resources. Current conditions widen health inequalities; the negative effects of our lifestyles can be seen in the rising levels of chronic diseases. Implementation of the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) is not only essential to our survival, but is also an opportunity to build a more equal European region and inspire the rest of the world.

Leadership and collaboration

To achieve the SDGs, there must be a decisive shift in government to work towards more commonly defined priorities, including economic ones. Collaboration across interests should be strengthened and synergies nurtured. For example, much can be done to implement the circular economy in ways that create positive health impacts, while effective policy and regulations remain needed to change the unhealthy and unsustainable approaches used by some industries to produce and promote their products.

For progress to be made, leadership is essential. The WHO has a major opportunity to actively encourage greater collaboration across sectors and actors to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Mobilising resources

The experience within the public health sector of working with people, particularly the most vulnerable, and of engaging and empowering them to make healthier choices for themselves and the environment is a real asset to efforts to achieve the SDGs. National public health institutes and health promoting organisations also play a vital role in facilitating inter-sectoral work. Their efforts to



improve health literacy can be extended to improving sustainability literacy. However some institutes and organisations are merging whilst others suffer reduced funding or are disappearing. Public health institutes and workforces for health promotion must be recognised for, and themselves highlight and claim, the essential role they play in achieving the SDG targets.

Achieving health and sustainability together

Through the [INHERIT initiative](#), EuroHealthNet is contributing to by leading work on policies and actions that encourage healthy and sustainable ways of living (green space and housing), moving (active travel) and consuming (food). INHERIT has recently published an overview report on the links between behaviour, health, and equity, and a database of over 80 promising practices.

Notes:

EuroHealthNet is a not-for-profit partnership of public bodies working from local to regional, national, and international levels across Europe. Our mission is to help build healthier communities and tackle health inequalities within and between European States. www.eurohealthnet.eu

Inherit is a research project which aims to encourage us to modify our current lifestyles, characterized by a 'take, make, consume, dispose' models of growth, to formulate scenarios for a more sustainable future, and to design, implement and test inter-sectoral initiatives to achieve the desired change. www.inherit.eu. A workshop *[Tell us: how can we achieve healthier and more sustainable lifestyles in Europe in 2040?](#)* Will be held on 26/09/17 in Brussels.

The WHO **Regional Committee for Europe** is the WHO's decision-making body in the European Region. It comprises representatives of each Member State in the Region, and meets for 4 days in September each year. www.euro.who.int/en/about-us/governance/regional-committee-for-europe

The UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda is the international strategy to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities and tackle climate change, while ensuring that no one is left behind. www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/

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