



Concept note

Ensuring healthy lives for all?

All United Nations member states have agreed on the United Nations [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) and are resolved to achieve them by the year 2030. Following the significant achievements of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), health remains central also in the SDGs. Health is the focus of SDG3: "Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages", and most of the other goals are directly or indirectly related to health. The SDGs agenda focuses on improving equity for vulnerable and disadvantaged people, and pursue global development that will benefit all countries around the world. As global collaboration efforts gain momentum, we ask: are we on the right path to ensure healthy lives for all?

While the MDGs accelerated political support and helped set global and national agendas, much still remains to be done. Global challenges increasingly require global solutions, and harmonisation of efforts through global governance. The SDGs capture this complexity through a common declaration of commitment to solve a range of challenges that face both people and planet. Billions of people live in poverty and inequalities in opportunities and wealth are rife. Global health threats, environmental disasters, war and conflict with ensuing humanitarian crisis call for quick, global responses. Displacement of people and persistent gender and health inequalities are some of the global challenges we face. Innovative and bold solutions are needed.

There are vast differences in resilience of health systems and access to and quality of health services and health personnel around the globe. The global health field has expanded to include a wide range of actors such as public sector, nongovernmental organisations, private sector, philanthropic foundations and academic institutions. [The 2016 World Health Assembly](#) (Geneva May 2016) agreed to prioritize universal health coverage, and to work with actors outside of the health sector to address the social, economic and environmental causes of health problems. Yet not all countries are in favour of implementing International Health Regulations. How do we create inclusive health policies and find good ways to organise and implement actions at a systems level to ensure healthy lives for all?

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Infectious diseases are still major killers in large parts of the world. According to the [World Health Statistics \(WHO, 2016\)](#), 2 million people are newly infected with HIV, there are 9.6 million new TB cases and 214 million malaria cases, and 1.7 billion people in need of treatment for neglected tropical diseases every year. Meanwhile, the search for efficient vaccine candidates is still ongoing, and cheap and efficient medicines for neglected tropical diseases are hard to find. Antimicrobial resistance is increasing and causes major global concern, and new, infectious diseases emerge. Where are we in our efforts to combat these diseases, and what collaborative actions must we undertake to tackle these threats?

Non-communicable diseases and injuries (NCDIs) are now more prevalent globally than infectious diseases. People who experience war, unrest, displacement, severe disadvantage and inequality are at high risk for developing physical and mental health problems. Environmental factors such as unsafe sanitation, air pollution and unsafe roads kill millions of people each year. Annually, 1.25 million people die from road traffic injuries alone. Such injuries require medical care and surgical skills which are mostly non-existent in the poorest parts of the world. As we take on a holistic view on health, how are we to balance the competing interests and priorities in the view of constrained health budgets around the world? What are the best ways to increase the number and quality of health personnel worldwide, and to retain qualified staff, particularly in least developed countries?

Women and children in low- and lower middle income countries are still the most vulnerable among us. Each year, more than 300 000 women die due to complications of pregnancy and childbirth, while close to 6 million children die before their fifth birthday. Most of these deaths are preventable and are due to a complex web of gender inequality, political, social and economic factors, lack of education, nutrition and poor health systems with inadequate equipment and lack of qualified health personnel. There is a general lack of education on and awareness about sexual and reproductive health and rights in parts of the world, and violence toward women is highly prevalent. The aim of the [Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescent's Health \(2016-2030\)](#) is that every woman, child and adolescent in any setting, anywhere in the world, is able to both survive and thrive by 2030. How far have we come in reaching this aim, and what are the factors that still hinder us?

Aim of the conference

The 10th annual conference Global Health and Vaccination Research (GLOBVAC) calls on Norwegian and international researchers, students, health professionals, policy makers, the private sector and others with an interest in global health to draw on their expertise and contribute to the debate on how to ensure healthy lives for all through a common, global agenda on SDGs.

The conference remains the main platform and meeting place for all GLOBVAC supported research projects within the [thematic areas of the GLOBVAC programme](#):

- Prevention and treatment of, and diagnostics for, communicable diseases, particularly vaccine and vaccination research
- Family planning, reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health
- Health systems and health policy research
- Innovation in technology and methods development
- Implementation research

The conference is organized in four parallel sessions:

1. **Inequity and unfinished agendas**
2. **Innovative approaches to improve health**
3. **Interaction, collaboration and new partnerships**
4. **Implementation and impact**

In each parallel session, there will be three symposia. The symposia are organised as 'vertical threads' running through the four sessions. The three symposia reflect the GLOBVAC programme themes.

All contributions are expected to relate to the SDG agenda, and/or reflecting the GLOBVAC programme priorities. We invite individual papers and panel proposals relating to the following (non-exhaustive) list:

Inequity and unfinished agendas: Migrant health, conflict settings, global health preparedness and core capacities, environmental effects on health, (solutions to) unequal availability of and access to health care services and health systems, harmful health and social policies and efforts to reduce disparity in a broad sense (the SDGs), human rights issues, social determinants of (ill)health, lack of efforts to tackle poverty-related, neglected diseases, continued maternal/child mortality and morbidity, reproductive health and education issues particularly for young women.

Innovative approaches to improve health: New or improved techniques and procedures, product development, new or improved vaccines/medicines/treatments for high burden infectious diseases, incorporate neglected practices such as surgery in low-resource settings, mental health interventions (particularly in primary health care setting and community setting), novel approaches to target maternal/child/reproductive health, improved health outcomes through projects or programming.

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Interaction, collaboration and new partnerships: capacity building and skills training, task-shifting, community-based organizing, international partnerships, pipelines of product development and how to interact at different stages, partnership programmes, funding agencies and policy/donor relations.

Implementation and impact: roll-out/up-to scale of medicines, sustainable health programmes, large scale interventions through health systems, build robust health care systems, focus on health policy issues, priority settings globally and nationally, rolling out/implementing registry research, global governance for health (social science).

Please see further instructions in the [Call for poster abstracts](#) and [Invitation to organize workshop or symposia](#).