



**Sixth Annual Meeting of the Council of Women World Leaders’
Ministerial Initiative for Health**

held on the occasion of the

62nd World Health Assembly

The Vieux-Bois

Geneva, Switzerland

19 May 2009: 12:00pm – 14:30pm

Chaired by the Council of Women World Leaders

EVENT REPORT

This sixth annual meeting of the Council of Women World Leaders’ Ministerial Initiative for Health, held in Geneva, Switzerland on the occasion of the 62nd World Health Assembly, brought together both women and men Ministers of Health, senior staff from Ministries of Health from developed and developing countries, colleagues from the World Health Organization (WHO), representatives from the target countries of the Ministerial Leadership Initiative for Global Health (MLI), and collaborating MLI partners.

After attendees greeted one another at a networking reception held immediately prior to the event, Council Secretary General, Laura Liswood, opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees on behalf of the Council and its distinguished Chair, the Honorable Tarja Halonen, President of the Republic of Finland, and the Honorable Margot Wallström, Vice President of the European Commission and Chair of the Council’s Ministerial Initiative. Liswood provided an overview of the Council’s development, structure, and unique mission, and shared information on the range of the Council’s current and past initiatives, giving special attention to the work of Council at the ministerial level. Included in that work at the ministerial level is MLI, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Liswood went on to identify the link between MLI and the Ministerial Initiative, and explained that the meeting was a new opportunity for all attendees present to participate in MLI by choosing to be engaged in the dissemination of and policy dialogues on the WHO’s first-ever report on women’s health globally, due out in June 2009.

To welcome attendees on behalf of the WHO, Dr. Catherine D’Arcanques gave brief welcoming remarks after being introduced by Liswood. Dr. D’Arcanques stressed that the H1N1 influenza was a central topic to this year’s WHA, and that the global financial crisis reminded us of the necessary interdependence of political and financial leaders. That leadership is called to rise when health care is deteriorating, which affects the most vulnerable – usually women and children. The upcoming WHO report is a report on primary health care, firmly grounded in moral principles. It also includes information on sexual health, which needs to be disseminated to women and girls through sexual education. This has proved to be extremely cost-effective, as has family planning services and access to information. Although these solutions have been identified and are known to be effective in bettering the health of women and girls, Dr. D’Arcanques emphasized that we must still pay attention to the vulnerability of women and girls. The Council of Women World Leaders, she pointed out, does just that. On behalf of WHO, Dr. D’Arcanques noted that the Council has the WHO’s full support, as does the other MLI partners.

Liswood thanked Dr. D’Arcangues for her remarks, and invited ministers of health to soon introduce themselves. Before calling on attendees, Liswood gave a more in-depth overview of the Council’s Public Health Graduate Fellowship Program, in its inaugural year this year, and in which many ministers present are participating. The growth of this unique opportunity, Liswood said, depends on the engagement of ministers and ministries of health, and she asked all participating ministers to consider hosting a student in next year’s program if they hadn’t already pledged to host one this summer. She emphasized that the Council exists to support its membership and members of the Ministerial Initiative; the Council looks forward to working with Ministers of Health to write letters of support or calls to action, for example the article on maternal mortality that was published last year in collaboration with the Swedish Ministry of Health.

To begin the introduction of participating ministers, the Honorable Rigmor Aasrud, Deputy Minister of Health in Norway, stressed that the global financial crisis affects women greatly. Norway is pioneering a number of new laws that will provide greater support to women and their children; for example, a new law is being introduced that provides kindergarten schooling to all children, regardless of financial ability to attend. This allows more women to stay in the labor force and earn a living. Gender issues in Norway, the Deputy Minister mentioned, still have a long way to go. Education is still very gender specific: boys receive technical and economic lessons, whereas girls are taught other subjects. This type of education needs to be modified and be more gender- balanced.

Honorable Minister of Health and Sanitation Sheiku Tejan Koroma from Sierra Leone spoke about reproductive health services in his country. Abortion procedures for women less than 12 weeks pregnant are available at no charge. Collective health care is one of Sierra Leone’s main priorities. There are still millions of women living in conflict areas around the world and in Africa who do not have access to reproductive health care services; these services need to be made more available to women and the services offered need to be reliable, safe, and affordable.

Following Minister Koroma, the Honorable Minister for Health in Moldova, Honorable Larisa Catrinci, thanked the Council for the opportunity to be at the meeting and to share information about health and gender in her country. The most pervasive gender challenges in Moldova are related to violence against women. She noted that changes should now happen in this area because Moldova is led by a female Prime Minister and the percentage of women in the Moldovan parliament is high. She supported the Council’s and WHO’s initiative calling for greater awareness of women’s health issues globally, and looked forward to collaborating with the Council on this initiative.

Dr. Y.V. Pradhan, Chief of the Policy, Planning and International Cooperation Division, the Ministry of Health and Population in Nepal, thanked the Council for the opportunity to share information about the top priorities in Nepal. First, they aim to ensure that everyone has access to basic health care. This is enshrined in the constitution of the country and the government has launched a free health care program for all citizens. Secondly, they are working to reduce the disparities and inequalities in access to health care. The government is working to achieve Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 4 and 5, and they are optimistic that they will be reached before 2015. Given that maternal mortality in Nepal is high, the government has launched several programs to reduce the incidences of maternal death. The government now offers free delivery care for all women in society, regardless of social status, and they also subsidize transport costs. Thirdly, the government is actively engaging civil society in order to make these priorities a success, and has also launched a campaign to make citizens more aware of health hazards, such as smoking.

Next Ms. Saadia Zahidi of the World Economic Forum spoke about the Gender Gap Report produced each year by the Forum, which includes information about sex-selective abortions, healthy life

expectancy, and other indicators. Zahidi noted that this report may be of interest to the attendees; it can be downloaded from the Council's website at:

<http://www.cwwl.org/Media/Gender%20Gap%20Report%202008.pdf>

The last of the ministers to give remarks was the Honorable Jae-Hee Jeon, Minister for Health, Welfare and Family Affairs in South Korea. She has been impressed with the presentations of her colleagues here and appreciates the sharing of information. Korea is struggling with low fertility rates – 1.16% - and the country is worried about population decline. The number of older citizens is growing rapidly. The Minister stressed that the issue of aging is also a woman's issue because the majority of the older population are women in Korea. There are two ministers in the South Korean cabinet who work to promote these women's issues – she herself is one of them – and the second is a minister who deals with women's issues and gender equality and promotes the rights of women.

Liswood thanked all for making interventions and then introduced Rosann Wisman, Director of the Ministerial Leadership Initiative for Global Health (MLI), to give an overview of MLI and the work of the collaborating partners Realizing Rights, Results for Development, the World Health Organization, and the Council of Women World Leaders.

Ms. Wisman thanked the group for coming and the Council for organizing the event. She explained the core mission of the five year program - building the capacity, political leadership, and expertise of ministries of health to coordinate donor aid, establishing equitable health budgeting for greater efficiency and impact, and prioritizing women's health and reproductive health around the world – and that it is supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. She acknowledged the five MLI countries (Mali, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, and Nepal) and thanked the representatives from those countries for being at the meeting. She emphasized that when we improve the health of women, we see improvements in indicators for families, communities, and societies. The WHO report on women's health will be an important indicator of how we can improve in certain areas, and getting the word out about this report and its findings can be supported by Ministers of Health and their staff. Rosann then said that she hoped the countries at the meeting will be engaged in regional policy dialogues once the report is finished. She concluded her remarks with an invitation to all to attend the MLI Reception the following evening at the Intercontinental Hotel.

Liswood invited Ms. Joy Phumaphi, Vice President of the Human Development Network at the World Bank, to make brief remarks. Ms. Phumaphi was appreciative of the opportunity to attend the event and was pleased to see the growth of MLI and the emphasis on supporting women, which is a tenet the Bank supports because it “makes sense.” The Bank recently produced a guide on how to avert humanitarian crises in the wake of economic depression. The Bank also strongly believes that in times of hardship it is important to pay attention to nutrition. To assist in this effort, the Bank has designed a nutrition program that is destined for pregnant women, lactating mothers, and babies. It is also important that in times of crisis that women are not forced to work and put their earnings towards something other than food. The Bank has found that social safety nets support women incredibly well in times of hardship and she encouraged attendees to create social safety nets with the help of the Bank, who can send volunteers to countries to assess the situation and install social safety nets. This assistance is available to all developing countries and the Bank encourages the engagement of Ministers of Finance and Education in this outreach. The World Bank headquarters should be contacted directly if there are countries who wish to have more information, rather than contacting the World Bank local offices in-country. There are four teams from the headquarters who have been established to travel globally and respond to country requests.

Liswood guided the conversation into a more substantive feedback session on the WHO report with the WHO colleagues present. She gave an overview of how the Council is tasked with working jointly with

the WHO to bring together Ministers of Health, specifically women ministers, to serve in a consultative capacity to the WHO in the global dissemination of the WHO report on women's health. Liswood stated that the conversation would now be opened to include all in the room to hear their thoughts on how they would like to be engaged in regional policy dialogues that are reflective of the policy recommendations included in the report. She welcomed Dr. Claudia Garcia-Moreno, Gender, Violence and HIV/AIDS Adviser in the WHO Department of Reproductive Health and Research, to provide an overview of the Global Report on Women's Health and to listen to how ministers and their staff can use this tool.

Women's health, Dr. Garcia-Moreno said, is a priority for Dr. Margaret Chan, Director General of WHO. This report will cover sexual and reproductive health for women, and is written by age progression, starting with infants and moving through old age. The report is intended to be a contribution to national and regional-level policy dialogues that can be held, based on the findings of the report. The evidence presented in the report indicates that there are different regional health issues for women. The WHO has partnered with the Council and MLI to plan and hold policy dialogues in major regions around the globe. Dr. Garcia-Moreno at this point asked ministers to share some of the challenges they face as they try to champion women's health. What are the opportunities they see? How can this report be useful?

Secretary Marion Caspers-Merk, Parliamentary State Secretary at the Ministry of Health in Germany, challenged the group to organize public debates on the report. She said that reports cannot change the world if they are left on a shelf to collect dust; they must be discussed and policy changes must take place as a result of those discussions. She volunteered to hold consultations in Germany with women's organizations. Gender is a priority for the Ministry of Health in Germany: they have a website for women's health, they have prioritized maternal health care, and they have identified the link between migration and poverty, especially for women. The German government has organized programs for women who have come from other countries/diasporas as migrants.

Dr. Lily S. Sulistyowati, Head of the Center for Public Communication at the Ministry of Health in Indonesia shared that they have similar problems to ones that have been raised in the discussion. They are trying to reduce infant and maternal mortality, and have distributed midwives throughout villages to assist in delivery and provide education services on sexual health. Indonesia has also recently passed a law calling for 30% of parliamentarians to be women, indicating the country's desire to have women's voices heard.

The last ministry representative to contribute to the discussion was the Honorable Minister Mphu Keneiloe Ramatlapeng, Minister of Health and Social Welfare in Lesotho, who expressed appreciation at Secretary Caspers-Merk's remarks. A report like this needs to be discussed everywhere, she said. Countries don't often collect data for reporting but this should happen and debate needs to happen. She called for a large report launch in Africa, perhaps in tandem with the AFRO meetings. Women ministers of health must be involved in this effort, she reiterated, and need to participate in the regional discussions.

Liswood brought the meeting to a close and said that all of the points made during the meeting were well taken. She called for press to cover more women's health issues, and asked all Ministers present to assist the WHO and the Council in championing the WHO report. She welcomed representatives to get in touch with the Council if there were initiatives they needed supported, thanked the group for coming, and encouraged further networking and collaborating at the tables.

Participant List

Ministers, Secretaries, and Representatives of Ministries of Health

Ethiopia

Dr. Nejmudin Kedir
Federal Ministry of Health

Dr. Hareya Fassil
International Affairs Advisor to the Minister
of Health

Dr. Tsehaynesh Messele
Director General
Ethiopian Health and Nutrition
Research Institute

Dr. Kesete-Berhan Admassu
General Director, Health Promotion and
Disease Prevention
Federal Ministry of Health

Ms. Rahel Gizaw
MLI Country Lead, Ethiopia

Finland

Dr. Gisela Blumenthal
Senior Health Adviser
Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Germany

Ms. Marion Caspers-Merk
Parliamentary State Secretary
Ministry of Health

Ms. Dagmar Reitenbach
Head of Division
Multilateral Cooperation in the
Field of Health

Indonesia

Dr. Lily S. Sulistyowati
Head of Center for Public Communication
Ministry of Health

Dr. Husniah Rubiana Th. Akib
Head of National Agency of Drug and Food
Control

Lesotho

Honorable Mphu Keneiloe Ramatlapeng
Minister of Health and Social Welfare

Mali

Dr. Mountaga Bouare
Technical Counselor
Ministry of Health

Prof. Toumani Sidibe
Director
Ministry of Health

Ms. Allison Gamble Kelley
MLI Country Lead, Mali

Moldova

Honorable Larisa Catrinci
Minister of Health

Dr. Eugenia Berzan
Head of International Relations and External
Assistance Department
Ministry of Health

Mongolia

Sengee Gantuya
Officer in charge of Nursing Human
Resources Policy and Planning
Ministry of Health

Dr. B. Bayart
Director of the Department of Public
Administration and Management
Ministry of Health

Nepal

Dr. Y.V. Pradhan
Chief of Policy Planning and International
Cooperation Division
Ministry of Health

Dr. Govinda Prasad Ojha
Director General
Department of Health Services
Ministry of Health

Dr. Mahesh Kumar Maskey
Chair of the Nepal Health Research Council;
Chair of the Health Policy Advisory
Committee
Ministry of Health

Ms. Gabriele Mallapaty
MLI Country Lead, Nepal

Norway

Honorable Rigmor Aasrud
State Secretary of Health

Ms. Lubna Jaffery Fjell
Political Adviser to the Health Minister
Ministry of Health

Senegal

Dr. Bocar Daff
Director of Reproductive Health
Ministry of Health

Prof. Anta Tal Dia
Chief of Preventive Medical Service and
Public Health
Institute of Health and Development

Madam Deputy Astou Kane Sall
President
Commission of Health, Population, Social
Affairs and National Solidarity

Dr. Ndack Ly
MLI Country Lead, Senegal

Sierra Leone

Honorable Minister Sheiku Tejan Koroma
Minister of Health and Sanitation

Dr. Kisito Daoh
Chief Medical Officer
Ministry of Health

Ms. Hortenzia Beciu
MLI Country Lead, Sierra Leone

South Korea

Honorable Jae-Hee Jeon
Minister for Health, Welfare and Family
Affairs

Ms. Hana Kim
International Cooperation Division

Spain

Ms. Carmen Castanon Jimenez
Deputy Director General
International Relations
Ministry of Health

***Representatives of the World Health
Organization (WHO)*****WHO Headquarters, Switzerland**

Dr. Catherine d’Arcangues
Coordinator in the Office of the Director
Department of Reproductive Health and
Research

Dr. Claudia Garcia-Moreno
Gender, Violence and HIV/AIDS
Adviser
Department of Reproductive Health and
Research

Ms. Monika Gehner
Communications Officer
Gender, Women and Health

Dr. Mike Mbizvo
Director
Department of Reproductive Health and
Research

Ms. Isabelle de Zoysa
Senior HIV/AIDS Adviser to the Assistant
Director-General for Family and
Community Health

Europe Regional Office

Dr. Nata Menabde
Deputy Regional Director

Partners and Conveners

Laura Liswood
Secretary General
Council of Women World Leaders

Brita Stevenson
Program Manager
Council of Women World Leaders

Rosann Wisman
Director
Ministerial Leadership Initiative for Global
Health

Peggy Clark
Managing Director
Realizing Rights: The Ethical Globalization
Initiative

Naoko Otani
Director
Program Development & Operations
Realizing Rights: The Ethical Globalization
Initiative

Lucy Crawford
Program Associate
Realizing Rights: The Ethical Globalization
Initiative

David de Ferranti
President
Results For Development

Amanda Folsom
Manager of Technical Activities, MLI
Senior Program Officer
Results For Development

Marty Makinen
Technical Director, MLI
Managing Director
Results For Development

Distinguished Guests

Ms. Joy Phumaphi
Vice President
Human Development Network
The World Bank

Ms. Saadia Zahidi
Associate Director and Head of Constituents
World Economic Forum



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Ministerial Initiative for Health**

Held on the occasion of
The 62nd World Health Assembly

Restaurant Vieux-Bois, Salon Dunant: 12 Avenue de la Paix, Geneva

19 May 2009: 12:00pm – 14:30pm

Convened by
The Council of Women World Leaders

AGENDA

12:00-12:20 Welcoming Remarks

Laura Liswood, Secretary General, Council of Women World Leaders
Dr. Catherine d’Arcangues, Coordinator in the Office of the Director,
Department of Reproductive Health and Research, World Health
Organization

12:20-12:30 Introductions of Participating Ministers and Attendees

12:30-14:20 Working Lunch

12:30 - 12:40 Current Activities of the Council’s Ministerial Initiative for Health

- Laura Liswood, Secretary General, Council of Women World Leaders

12:40 - 13:10 Current ministerial projects and proposals

- Ministers of Health and Ministry Representatives

13:10 – 13:20 Ministerial Leadership Initiative for Global Health (MLI)

- Rosann Wisman, Managing Director, MLI

*13:20 – 14:20 Presentation and Open Discussion of the WHO Global Report on
Women’s Health*

- Dr. Claudia Garcia-Moreno, World Health Organization

14:20-14:30 Concluding Remarks and Next Steps



Sixth Annual Meeting of the Council of Women World Leaders'
Ministerial Initiative for Health

Annotated Agenda for Working Lunch (12:30- 14:20)

- ❖ *Current Activities of the Council's Ministerial Initiative for Health:* Laura Liswood, Secretary General, Council of Women World Leaders
 - Ministerial Leadership Initiative for Global Health (MLI)
 - Public Health Graduate Fellowship Program
 - Global article on Maternal Mortality: Fall 2008

- ❖ *Current ministerial projects and proposals:* Ministers of Health and Ministry Representatives
 - What are the top three priorities in your Ministry?
 - Describe any current initiatives related to women's health and reproductive health: what are lessons learned and best practices?
 - What projects and proposals are being developed?

- ❖ *Ministerial Leadership Initiative for Global Health:* Rosann Wisman, Managing Director, MLI

MLI, a multi-year program funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, seeks to strengthen the capacity of ministries of health in five target countries: Ethiopia, Mali, Nepal, Senegal, and Sierra Leone to provide leadership in three policy areas: health financing for equity, donor harmonization in health, and reproductive health. MLI works to support Ministers of Health in upholding the right to health by ensuring equitable access to public health services for all.

- ❖ *Presentation and Open Discussion of the WHO Global Report on Women's Health:* Dr. Claudia Garcia-Moreno, World Health Organization

Under MLI, the Council is responsible for working jointly with the WHO to bring together Ministers of Health, specifically women ministers, to serve in a consultative capacity to the WHO in the global dissemination of the first-ever Global Report on Women's Health. The Council welcomes colleagues from the World Health Organization to provide an overview of the Global Report on Women's Health. With an estimated completion date of July 2009, this report is an in-depth quantitative and qualitative analysis of women's health globally and includes specific policy recommendations. Given that this report will serve as a toolkit for Ministers of Health, the Council and WHO aim to receive input from Ministers as to how the information in the report can be put to use and be useful for Ministers.

- How can Ministers spur policy action on critical issues raised in the report related to women's health? What tools or support are needed?
- How can Ministers be engaged in regional discussions on the content of the report, and/or regional launches of the report?
- What tangible actions should be undertaken by Ministries of Health, NGOs, and/or international organizations following publication of the report?