

Intersectoral Collaboration

The successful development of the Primary Health Care approach requires effective intersectoral collaboration. Presently, the health sector collaborates poorly with other development sectors.

The problem is caused by:

- the lack of policy and motivation to collaborate intersectorally. Health is not seen to be an integral part of development; the health sector lacks a development perspective;
- the absence of mechanisms or skills for intersectoral collaboration;
- incompatible government structures;
- fragmentation within the health sector itself; and
- centralised, top-down planning and decision-making.

The health related areas in most need of intersectoral collaboration are:

- Nutrition
- AIDS/HIV
- Environmental health, particularly water and sanitation
- Social welfare
- Family planning
- Housing
- Literacy

All health personnel should be reoriented and retrained to develop a common vision and understanding of Primary Health Care, its processes and the place of health in development.

We call on government to:

- recognise health as an integral part of general development; health promotes development and development promotes health.
- restructure relevant government departments to promote intersectoral collaboration on health. This restructuring should parallel the democratically elected bodies of a new government. Implied here is that all present unilateral restructuring be halted.
- ensure and fund mechanisms and processes for intersectoral collaboration at all levels, be they district, subregional, regional or national. This will entail the establishment of development forums at these levels.
- devolve as much decision making as possible to the lowest government level to allow the line authorities maximum room to cooperate at the local level.
- establish a unified National Health Service that will facilitate dialogue with other sectors.
- undertake the needed skills training within each health related sector. The cadres from each sector should be trained together in joint courses.

- ensure that health goals are built into the plans of relevant development sectors.
- we recognise that institutionalising intersectoral collaboration is dependent upon the outcome of the present constitutional process. We do, however, believe that some health concerns require urgent intersectoral action.

We call on the interim government of national unity to promote intersectoral collaboration in at least the following priority areas:

- Nutrition
- HIV/AIDS
- Environmental health, particularly water and sanitation
- Social welfare
- Family planning
- Housing
- Literacy

