



News

Rich nations should pay more to developing countries

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Geneva

The World Health Organization called this week for more resources to fight HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria and to improve maternal and child health in a global push to halve extreme poverty by 2015.

The appeal to wealthy nations came a day after the Harvard economist Jeffrey Sachs delivered a report to the United Nations secretary general, Kofi Annan, entitled *Investing in Development*, about how to salvage efforts to achieve the millennium development goals. Interim reports published in September showed that the world will fall far short of most of the goals to reduce poverty and improve health in developing countries by 2015.

Professor Sachs, who directed the three year UN Millennium Project, made proposals on how to get the goals back on track. Three of the eight development goals (about child mortality; maternal health; and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases) relate directly to health. The others relate indirectly to health, such as eradicating extreme poverty and hunger and ensuring environmental sustainability, which includes providing sanitation and clean water.

In a parallel report on the health related goals, WHO said that investing in proved solutions would turn the tide to achieve the goals. The organisation called on wealthy countries to increase their development aid, if they have not yet done so, to 0.7% of national income by 2015.

"We have the means to achieve those goals. We have the technology," said Dr Lee Jongwook, director general of WHO. "What we need are the resources and the political will."

WHO called for a massive scaling-up of existing health programmes and for substantial new investment in the public health infrastructures of the world's poorest countries. It said that more investment was needed in human resources to stem the brain drain of doctors and nurses.

In sub-Saharan Africa, increasing staff shortages are jeopardising a global effort to deliver antiretroviral treatment to the three million people who need it by the end of 2005. WHO will publish a progress report on this "3 by 5" programme on 26 January.

More resources are needed to strengthen health systems to make it possible to deliver antiretroviral treatment to patients with HIV/AIDS as well as treatment and medicines for tuberculosis and malaria, and to deliver better antenatal care to improve maternal and child health, the global health agency said.

For further information see www.who.int/mdg and www.unmillenniumproject.org

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