

Canadian Conference on Global Health (CCGH) 2010

(formerly Canadian Conference on International Health (CCIH))

Hosted for the 17th year by: The Canadian Society for International Health (CSIH)

Global Health: A Humanitarian Crisis?

Sunday, October 31 to Wednesday, November 3, 2010

Crowne Plaza Ottawa Hotel

101 Lyon St. N., Ottawa, ON, Canada

The state of global health is in a global crisis – millions die each year needlessly.¹ This is a crisis which requires a humanitarian response. Why a humanitarian response? A **humanitarian crisis** (or "humanitarian disaster") is an event or series of events which represents a critical threat to the health, safety, security or wellbeing of a community or other large group of people, and which has a profound impact on the poorest of the poor.² **While the state of global health is not usually seen as an acute or unexpected emergency; there is nevertheless an urgent need for global health to be recognized as a serious humanitarian crisis.** The response to this global crisis needs to be dramatic and human to at least match the zeal and resources that characterize our response to tsunamis, floods, or earthquakes. It requires a concerted, balanced and coordinated response utilizing humanitarian approaches along a continuum from emergency rapid responses that we see in emergency situations to the longer term sustained development investments in health systems and their good governance. The response also has to come from other sectors such as education, environment and transportation, trade and commerce, which not only determine health but help to strengthen resilience and responses to disasters and emergency situations.

In the past five years, of the 40 countries at the bottom of the Human Development Index, 26 have experienced war or major natural disaster. Many of these countries, as they try to move forward, are faced with dysfunctional social systems, and infrastructures which are extremely weak or nonexistent. Major natural disasters, especially severe drought, floods and earthquakes will have an inequitable impact on those very same nations. Populations from low-income countries who already face a considerable burden due to the effects of poverty, are particularly vulnerable to the effects of natural disasters. Capacity for rapid, coordinated and multi sectoral risk management and response, which includes humanitarian responses, is needed for national governments, international and regional organizations and development and humanitarian workers now and in the future³

The 2010 Canadian Conference on Global Health will provide the venue and the opportunity for the global health community to come together with other sectors which also may have an impact on global health. This conference will provide the opportunity for the critical interface with other emerging crises and the need to ensure that health is placed front and centre as a priority issue that needs to be addressed. The following issues will be discussed: the economic crisis, the movement of people (forced migration and refugees), armed combat, climate change, pandemics and transparency and governance. These issues will be highlighted in terms of their relationship to the global health crises and the need to integrate health into these various sector responses.

¹ **Global health** is the health of populations in a global context and transcends the perspectives and concerns of individual nations.^[1] Health problems that transcend national borders or have a global political and economic impact, are often emphasized.^[2] Thus, global health is about worldwide improvement of health, reduction of disparities, and protection against global threats that disregard national borders.^[3]

² A **humanitarian crisis** (or "humanitarian disaster") is an event or series of events which represents a critical threat to the health, safety, security or wellbeing of a community or other large group of people, usually over a wide area. Armed [conflicts](#), [epidemics](#), [famine](#), [natural disasters](#) and other major emergencies may all involve or lead to a humanitarian crisis.

³ Knight Centre for International Media, 2010

Daily Conference Themes:

Sunday, October 31

Pathways to Global Health Competence

- Global health competence for practitioners, researchers, and community development and government decision makers will be further strengthened through workshops and consultations at this forum that will improve our collective ability to address the crisis.

Monday, November 1

Defining the Crisis: Global Health, Equity and Humanitarian Crises

- The state of global health, the inequities in global health and the determinants of health will be highlighted as one of the key subthemes of this conference. Humanitarian responses will also be highlighted as well as global and regional approaches, processes challenges and solutions will be presented and discussed.

The Crises and Responses

- The scope of natural disasters climate change and political/social conflicts and the inequitable impact on global health will be a critical subtheme. Humanitarian responses will also be highlighted as well as global and regional approaches, processes challenges and solutions.

Tuesday, November 2

Evidence/Research and Interventions

- Evidence/research and interventions will be a third subtheme. What is the evidence, what is working what is not working and why. What are the challenges, (financing, implementation and dissemination)?
- What are the new innovations and what have we been doing that works and what do we know that works but is not getting the support it needs?
- Where are the research gaps? Who is funding and what are the partnerships that need to be in place to ensure sustained funding and support to establish the best evidence?

Wednesday, November 3

Challenges and Solutions

Putting the Human into Humanitarian Responses

- What about the response? How well are humanitarian responses responding, what are the challenges. What about more sustainable solutions to the global health crises?
- What have we learned from humanitarian responses and how can the response be sustained and more effective after the emergency phase? Are there success stories in terms of health systems strengthening which we should be celebrating? Why are the success stories not being rolled out?
- How are we coordinating with other sectors to build and strengthen responses that will improve global health inequities?