

## **SUMMARY**

### **URBAN HEALTH IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT** Side Event: Friday March 27, 1:15-2:30pm, Room 7

Intergovernmental Negotiations on the Post-2015 Development Agenda  
New York, 23 – 27 March 2015

#### **Organizers:**

The International Society for Urban Health at the New York Academy of Medicine, The UNU Institute of Global Health, The World Urban Campaign, The International Council for Science, Eminence Associates for Social Development

#### **SUMMARY**

This side session on Urban Health In Sustainable Development aimed to raise awareness of urban health as a priority in sustainable development and provide examples of how decisions made about the built and natural environment, economic development and education are equally as important as the traditional concerns about health care and basic public health services in creating the conditions in which people can be as healthy as they can be. Cities are also a particularly effective levels of governance at which to integrate the work of all sectors to promote health. Many of the targets proposed for Goal 11 on Sustainable Cities are determinants of health, and the unique risks and opportunities of urban dwellers, now the majority in all regions of the world, must be considered in Goal 3 and virtually all other SDGs. Opportunities to advance the necessary dialogue and collaboration to promote urban health lie in the next steps of indicator development and implementation.

The speakers highlighted growing recognition at the UN, country and local levels of the many determinants of health, particularly for urban populations, as well as the need for multisectoral action to ensure urban health. Suvi Huikuri, Technical Officer for the World Health Organization, focused on the problem of non-communicable diseases that impact urban dwellers at alarmingly high rates and the urgent call to address health inequities in cities. WHO has prepared advice on Intersectoral Action on Health and emphasizes the need for local governments to cooperate across sectors along with civil society and the private sector to improve health by acting on its many determinants. Maruxa Cardama, Co-founder and Executive Coordinator, Communitas Coalition -- a World Urban Campaign Partner, stressed that cities are sources of opportunity, choice and resources but that many aspects of urban environments – slums, violence, crowding – pose many physical and mental health risks. To address these effectively requires linkages across the SDGs and monitoring at city and local levels to identify challenges that would not be apparent in national level data. Some countries have national urban policies, and Derek Yach, Executive Director of the Vitality Institute and Member of the Board of Advisors of the UNU International Institute for Global Health, discussed the difficulty of translating these laws and norms into action on the ground across sectors to address determinants of health. There is a need for greater awareness of Health Impact Assessment tools and specific action items that can be utilized by non-health actors such as urban planners and economic development actors. The audience was advised of the International Conference on Urban Health as an important venue for advancing these discussions: it will take place in Dhaka, Bangladesh from May 24-27, and is hosted by Eminence Associates for Social Development with local government and NGO partners and The International Society on Urban Health.