

Statement from the People's Health Movement (PHM)

We welcome the 1st Health Systems Research Symposium and the rich presentations of research. But we would like to raise a number of issues and suggestions for the future.

1. Some areas of relative neglect that may be rectified in the next Symposium are:
 - a. the role of the health system in promoting primary health care, including the involvement of communities and intersectoral action (noting WHO's own definition of the health system, to wit, "all the activities whose primary purpose is to promote, restore or maintain health.");
 - b. the place of people and participatory research in the field of health systems research;
 - c. the challenge of achieving equity in balance with universal coverage of basic services;
 - d. the role and importance of public financing and the interrelationship of public financing and insurance. We detect a tacit approval for the expansion of private financing and insurance models.
2. We feel the while the importance of political and ideological factors were mentioned several times, more discussion could be had to discuss and determine the political, normative and ideological views of the community of health systems researchers. This is important because the community needs to engage in campaigning for health systems strengthening, as well as conducting research. Health systems policy should be informed by research; but it needs to be shaped by normative principles and values first.
3. The Research Community is heavily influenced by the University / Academic context and the publishing industry. But there was inadequate discussion about the way the HSR is shaped by these broader forces. In short, no discussion about the Political Economy of HSR and the biases in the Research Agenda that exist.
4. We must not tolerate the Myth of scarce resources. This requires us to give Equal focus and emphasis on the structural and Macro-economic context of Health Systems.

Signed this 18th day of November 2010 at Montreux, Switzerland:

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