

PROMOTING HEALTH IN TRADE AGREEMENTS

REPORT ON A TRAINING WORKSHOP
12 to 13 June 2006
Lilongwe, Malawi



Malawi Health Equity Network



**Malawi Health Equity Network
Centre for Health Planning (CHP),
SEATINI and
Training and Research Support Centre (TARSC)**

**Regional network for Equity in Health in east and
southern Africa (EQUINET)**

With support from SIDA Sweden

Table of contents

1. Background.....	2
2. Welcome and introductions.....	2
3. Presentations.....	3
4. Evaluation and closing.....	4
Appendix 1: List of delegates.....	6
Appendix 2: Programme.....	7

1. Background

The workshop on Protecting Health in Trade Agreements held in Malawi in June 2006 was held within the EQUINET programme with the Centre for Health Policy (South Africa) and SEATINI (Zimbabwe) - in collaboration with the Malawi Health Equity Network (MHEN) – to build capacities in state, legislative and civil society institutions to understand, analyse and promote public sector equity-oriented health systems within trade and investment policies and agreements.

The training courses aim to enable participants to carry out assessments nationally of the key trade and investment agreements that impact on health and to identify options for promoting public sector equity-oriented health systems within current trade and investment policies and agreements.

The workshop thus aimed to cover:

- an introduction to trade and health that outlines major issues affecting the region;
- an outline of health systems, their major components and the challenges posed by commercialisation;
- an introduction to the major global trade systems and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and how its agreements impact on health, and the options for protecting and promoting health within these agreements.;
- an outline of major trade agreements – GATS and TRIPS – that impact on health and the options for protecting and promoting health within these trade agreements;
- a guideline for an audit of the impact of trade agreements on health systems; and
- an introduction to analysing and understanding the health system's context in which policy is developed, designed and implemented.

After the workshop, EQUINET through SEATINI, CHP and the Training and Research Support Centre (TARSC) support country level follow-up activities to identify and deepen the understanding and evidence in priority trade and health issues identified at the workshop – mainly through the provision of technical support and input when necessary. MHEN would play a central role in coordinating activities amongst the relevant stakeholders.

A training manual developed by CHP, SEATINI and TARSC provides the content of the work covered. This brief highlights the major issues raised and the inputs from local presentations. The delegates to the meeting are shown in *Appendix 1* and the programme in *Appendix 2*.

2. Welcome and introductions

The third EQUINET workshop on trade sensitive health policy was held in Lilongwe, Malawi from 12-13 June 2006. The workshop, run by CHP and SEATINI, was well-attended by a wide-range of stakeholders from civil society, media (print and radio) and government. The Honourable Member Austin Mtukula, Vice Chair of Parliamentary Committee on Health, attended and participated in discussions. The health ministry had confirmed attendance, but were unable to attend due to unforeseen circumstances. The workshop was held with support from SIDA (Sweden).

3. Presentations

After initial welcomes and introductions the meeting was opened by Riaz Tayob who provided an introductory overview of EQUINET followed by a discussion of globalisation, trade and the challenges facing the development of equitable health systems.

This was followed by a presentation by a Director, Mr HJK Mandindi, in the Ministry of Trade on issues facing Malawi on trade negotiations – specifically with respect to health service delivery. This presentation was followed by an open discussion amongst stakeholders that provided a useful platform within which to springboard the discussion into trade issues.

Like the previous session there was an open discussion around the links between trade and health. Because the presentation by Mr HJK Mandindi touched on GATS, Riaz Tayob then proceeded with an input session on the WTO and trade agreements. The discussion explored WTO processes and provided a platform for engagement with the Honourable Member Ntukula on parliamentary processes in relation to the ratification of agreements made during WTO negotiations. The discussion shed light on national policy processes with the observation made that Malawi has no official representation based in Geneva at the WTO. Before lunch John Njunga, the national co-ordinator of the Malawi Health Equity Network (MHEN), provided an overview of MHEN, its evolution, its partners and key activities.

After lunch Haroon Wadee provided an input session on the health system. The session was very interactive with active participation from delegates. This was followed by an input session on healthcare financing flows and an open discussion on the nature and challenges facing the Malawian healthcare system. After a short break there was a wrap up session on regulation, the links to GATS and the challenges facing health sector regulation.

Day two was initiated with a brief re-cap and Q&A session to allow for clarification. This was followed by an input session on GATS by Riaz Tayob in which the challenges facing health systems under full commitments to the GATS were explored. The session ended with open discussion with between delegates and the Ministry of Trade. After tea Riaz Tayob provided an input session on TRIPS and the challenges facing access to safe, effective and affordable medicines/drugs. The session was interactive with delegates keen to explore policy options available to Malawi under the existing trade regime. The interactive discussion allowed for additional re-cap on the workings of the WTO and the options available to developing countries. This session built on day one reinforcing concepts flagged on day 1, and strengthening the notion of exploring the policy space available at a national level within a globalised environment.

Before lunch questions were raised by participants on options for taking action. At this point the trade audit framework was flagged and discussed briefly, emphasising the bottom-up nature of the process, with SEATINI/CHP available for technical input into locally-driven processes. At this point the tools needed to determine the policy space and policy action were flagged for the afternoon session on policy analysis.

After lunch Haroon Wadee provided an input session on policy analysis. The session was highly interactive with constant links and references made to policy options and challenges raised in earlier sessions. Two stakeholder analyses were conducted within the plenary to highlight the complexity of dealing with stakeholders and also in

developing appropriate processes and strategies that could potentially strengthen the health system. The two exercises dealt with local production of essential medicines and ARVs and the exportation of health personnel respectively. In both cases participants were able to explore the range of actor positions on the policy issues and generate a snapshot of the environment in which action could potentially be taken.

4. Evaluation and closing

After tea there was a wrap up by both Haroon Wadee and Riaz Tayob of the key concepts and issues covered in the two days. This was followed by an open discussion on the way forward.

4.1 Follow up

Below are issues that emerged from the discussions:

The audit framework was considered, noting that funding was not available at this stage to support the process. Policy issues to explore included Human Resources for Health, ARVs/Malaria/TB and health infrastructure.

It was noted that there are a range of stakeholders, but that delegates want to strengthen the process – community, civil society, trade ministry, health ministry, parliamentarians – to think through collectively on ways to develop momentum – noting that different organisations/institutions have different strengths. This includes involving media with public debates – radio, print and talk-shows – and traditional healers and private practitioners in consultative meetings.

The possibility of raising the issues of trade and health with the parliamentary portfolio committee on health was also discussed.

Delegates noted the need for:

- engagement between civil society and the Ministry of Trade;
- exploration of opportunities for mass-awareness and broadening participation by getting CHAM and MHEN on board – and taking it to communities, building on existing MHEN networking activities and meetings with parliamentarians on health; and
- MHEN to start a process with the Ministry of Trade and for the MHEN policy monitoring project to raise the relationship between trade and health.

To take these steps forward MHEN needs to find the right people for the process. There is also need to find ways to improve representation on the National Working Group on Trade Policy including improving co-ordination between the health and trade sector. In addition to the private sector there needs to be space for civil society representation.

As a follow up therefore, MHEN will take forward a second stage workshop and develop a proposal for this and develop its proposal for follow up research in co-operation with relevant stakeholders on the priority areas identified. This should target CSOs and the trade-health ministry interaction.

4.2 Evaluation

In terms of the workshop evaluation the following issues emerged:

- The presentation and organisation of the workshop was well-received.

- The content was deemed to be relevant pointing to the need to extra knowledge on the links between trade and health.
- Delegates found the training material useful.
- The interaction and discussion between delegates and between facilitators and delegates stimulated critical debate and reflection.
- Delegates felt that more could have done in terms of financial incentives so as to attract more senior government and CBO officials to the meeting.
- Delegates felt that there was a pressing need for more training workshops of this nature.
- There was emphasis on the need for both CHP and SEATINI to get involved in future processes.

The facilitators indicated their availability to provide technical support and input as and when necessary via e-mail or telephonically and more general requests to EQUINET for technical or follow up support would be channeled through the secretariat at TARSC (admin@equinetafrica.org) .

The meeting was closed by John Njunga of MHEN.

Appendix 1: List of delegates

Name	Organisation	Telephone	E-mail Address
N Majawa	FM 101 Radio	09484547	nathanmajawa@yahoo.co.uk
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Appendix 2: Programme

**Promoting Health in Trade agreements:
National training workshop
Lilongwe June 12-14 2006
In co-operation with Malawi Health Equity Network**

Agenda

Monday – June 12	Tuesday – June 13
<p>8.30-9.30 Opening Participant introductions and introduction to module objectives and timetable</p> <p>9.30-10.00 Tea break</p> <p>10.00-10.45 Guest speaker – Mr MJK Mandindi</p> <p>10.45-12.45 Introduction to trade and health: Overview of trade and equity and health systems</p> <p>12h45-13.00: Over of MHEN – John Njunga</p>	<p>8.30-9.15 clarification of day 1 (15 minutes) (HW/RT)</p> <p>9.15-10.40 : Overview of GATS</p> <p>10.45-11.15 Tea break</p> <p>11.15-13.00: Overview of TRIPS</p>
LUNCH 1300-1400	
<p>14.00-15.30 input session on the health system</p> <p>15.30-15.45 Tea</p> <p>15.45-16.30: input session on healthcare financing</p> <p>1630-1700 Introduction to regulation (Input Session)</p>	<p>14.00-15.30 Policy analysis</p> <p>15.30-15.45 Tea</p> <p>15.45-17h00 the way forward, wrap up and evaluation</p>