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Commissioner for Development Addresses Global Health MDGS

At the Cross Europe Conference, EU Commissioner for Development, Andris Piebalgs, addressed the progress made toward the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the work still need to be done.

In his keynote address at the conference titled “Delivering the Right to Health with the Health Millennium Development Goals,” Piebalgs offered an overall perspective of past, present and future actions toward the MDGs. The MDG framework focuses on three main priorities: mortality of children under five years old; maternal mortality; and the impact of major pandemics, such as HIV/AIDS and malaria.

Piebalgs reported that progress towards health-related MDGs remains totally insufficient, giving examples of the little and seemingly no changes in child and maternal mortality, respectively, in sub-Saharan Africa. Piebalgs did recognise the positive changes, citing the increase in the direct aid to health since 2000 by a factor of four, now amounting to 16 billion Euro a year. This increase has enabled access to HIV/AIDS treatment to three million people in developing countries.

Piebalgs then outlined four priority areas in the EU’s future commitment to global health challenges: the challenge of governance, the challenge of coherence of policies; the challenge of knowledge; and the challenge of health coverage. Specifically on health coverage, Piebalg addressed the prioritisation of aid commitments, the fragmentation of the health sector, and the division of labour. These priorities will be addressed in a future Commission Communication on the EU’s role in Global Health, in agreement with the Spanish Presidency.

The Cross-Europe Conference for Global Health took place 2 March in Brussels. The day included panel discussions including the EU Presidencies Panel consisting of the EU Presidency of Spain and the upcoming EU Presidencies, Belgium and Hungary, and the EU Institutions panel with representation from the three EU Institutions.

For more information, please visit: **www.actionforglobalhealth.eu**

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