



## “PRIORITIES OF HEALTH ECONOMICS IN AFRICA”

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### **Parallel session 6: New trends and debates in international health financing**

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#### **PS 06/1**

#### **Towards equitable and sustainable health financing systems through coordinated international effort. Proposed pathways of the Providing for Health (P4H) initiative**

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The rationale to develop equitable and sustainable national health financing systems so as to allow the disadvantaged populations to seek needed health care without the risks of financial catastrophe and impoverishment is now well established. Systems to raise adequate resources, to pool them and to ensure funds are used effectively and equitably are often not in place in many low- and middle-income countries, particularly in Africa and Asia. Heavy reliance on unorganised and impoverishing out-of-pocket resources, besides denying appropriate health care access to the most vulnerable, renders health financing management complex.

A large number of low- and middle-income countries, while acknowledging the need for more resources, are now realizing that mobilizing adequate resources for health is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for health development. Weak health financing systems prevent them from fully expending the mobilized resources and from extracting desirable health outcomes out of absorbed resources. As a result, there have been increasing demands from countries for technical support to develop their health financing and social security systems to increase the level and adequacy of health care access. Such demands often exceeded the ability of various international and bilateral organizations to respond. Moreover, dealing with several international and bilateral organizations introduced fresh set of problems for recipient countries.

Many global health partnerships have emerged in response to this scenario. Many of them are disease-specific with the goal of improving health systems in a way that will allow expansion of services aimed at their target diseases. The increased availability of money for specific interventions on a global scale calls for the efficient horizontal strengthening of national health systems and their organization as well as improved aid effectiveness. Mechanisms need to be explored for the effective channelling of targeted international interventions through existing structures and for combining them effectively with national action to develop health systems at user level, so as to provide coherent health services that efficiently respond to national health priorities.

This paper presents an overview of the existing international health partnerships and discusses the principles, design and proposed activities of the Providing for Health (P4H) initiative. The pathways of P4H are built around the objectives of the recent global responses such as the Paris Declaration, the Global Campaign on the Health MDGs and the International Health Partnership. Its rationale lies in complementing efforts to raise more funds by helping countries develop their own national health financing policies, systems and institutions that can achieve and maintain universal coverage and linking them with coordinated international support.