

A Theoretical and Analytical Review of Global Health Diplomacy: Creating Global Environmental Health towards Sustainable Development's Goals

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Abstract

Health diplomacy becomes an even more critical element in significant issues that needed to negotiate for health in the face of other interest. The role of diplomacy in health is vital. Good health and well-being require a clean and harmonious in many aspects. Health depends on where people live. Nowadays emergencies, conflict and disasters happen frequently, including natural disasters, chemical or radiological incidents, complex emergencies and deliberate events. A substantial fraction of the disease burden derived from these events is attributable to environmental risks factors which is link to health emergencies. WHO as the director and coordinator authority on international health within United Nations systems has responsibility to protect public health and supporting lead environment and to build a better and healthier future for people. This paper argues that The Sustainable Development Goals are not only target for WHO but for all agencies in different aspects. In regard of creating environmental health, as the only global agency with the mandate to cover the whole health agenda, WHO should continue to work closely with other partners in the UN family and beyond, and target-specific work is should be strengthened as well.

Keywords: *Diplomacy, Global Health, SDGS.*

INTRODUCTION

The role of diplomacy in health is vital. Good health and well-being require a clean and harmonious in many aspects. Health depends on where people live. Environment can directly and indirectly impact on people health. Environmental health examines the interaction between environment and people health and well being. These interactions affect quality of life, years of healthy lived, and health disparities. World Health Organization (WHO) defines environment as it relates to health as all the physical, chemical and biological factors external to a person, and all the related behaviors (World Health Organization, 2006).

Nowadays emergencies, conflict and disasters happen frequently, including natural disasters, chemical or radiological incidents, complex emergencies and deliberate events. A substantial fraction of the disease burden derived from these events is attributable to environmental risk factors which is linked to health emergencies. Every minute, five children in developing countries die caused of malaria or diarrhea. Every hour, 100 children die as a result of exposure to indoor smoke from solid fuels. Everyday, nearly 1.800 people in developing countries die as a result of exposure to urban air pollution. Every month, nearly 19.000 people in developing countries die due to air poisoning (Remondou, 2009).

WHO as the director and coordinator authority on international health within United Nations systems has responsibility to protect public health and supporting lead environment and to build a better and healthier future for people. To address multiple health challenges and other threats, WHO with working through offices in more than 150 countries, can not walk alone. Engagement and collaboration with other partners are needed to ensure the highest attainable level of health for all people. The various aspects of the decision making process for the development of environmental standards are discussed in this research from the standpoint of health. Several sections deal with the definition of environmental health objectives or norms, integration related aspects such as health, environment and development. While other sections discuss engagement of WHO with UNEP as international organization which concern on environmental matters.

The other sections discuss strategies and legal instruments which available to achieve global environmental health. Next sections discuss the challenges which facing in order to achieve the goal. Last sections will conclude all discussion and find solutions and recommendation related to these issue. This research will analyse the role and responsibility of WHO, what has been done and what challenges are facing by WHO on creating environmental health better. Lastly this research will conclude and give recommendations related to issues which will discuss. This research aims to answer; (1) To What Extend the global health diplomacy for achieving sustainable development goals?, and (2) What is the new findings and innovation for creating global health diplomacy towards sustainable development goals?

METHODS

In this article, describing the context, practice, and components of global health diplomacy, as applied operationally. examine the foundations of various approaches to global health diplomacy, along with their implications for the policies shaping the international public health and foreign policy environments. Based on these observations, we propose a taxonomy for the subdiscipline.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

UNDERSTANDING ENVIROMENTAL HEALTH

Enviromental health has been defined in 1999 documented by WHO as those expects of the human health and disease that are determined by factors in the enviroment. It also refers to the theory and practice of assessing and controlling factors in the enviroment that can potentially affect health. The healthy people 2020 enviromental health objectives focus on 6 themes, each of which highlights as an element of enviroment and their linkages to health matters:

a) Outdoor air quality

The world gets hotter and more crowded. Half the world has no access to clean fuels or technologies. The air is growing dangerously polluted. Nine out ten people now breathe polluted air, which kills 7 million people every year (United Nations, 2019). The health effect of air pollution are serious. Poor air quality is linked to premature death, cancer, and long-term damage to respiratory and cardiovascular systems. Moreover, air pollution effects are having an equivalent effect with smoking tobacco and much higher than effects of eating too much salt (World Health Organization, 2019). Progress has been made to reduce un healthy air emission, but in 2008, approximately 127 million lived in U.S. counties that exceeded national air quality standards (U.S Environmental Protection Agency, 2008). Decreasing air pollution is an important step in creating a healthy enviroment.

b) Surface and Ground Water

Surface and ground water quality concerns apply to both drinking water and recreational waters. Contamination by infectious agents or chemichals can cause mild to severe illness. Protecting water sources and minimizing to contaminated water sources are important parts of enviromental health.

c) Toxic Substances and Hazardous Waste

The health effects of toxic substances and hazardous waste are not yet fully understood. Research to better understand how these exposures may impact health is ongoing. Meanwhile, efforts to reduce exposures still continued. Reducing exposure to toxic substances and hazardous wastes is fundamental to environmental health.

d) Homes and Communities

People spend most of their time at home, office and school. Some of these environment may expose people to hazardous problems such as: indoor air pollution, inadequate heating and sanitation, structural problems, and electrical and fire hazards. These hazards can impact health and safety. Maintaining healthy homes and communities is essential to environmental health.

e) Infrastructure and Surveillance

Preventing exposure to environmental hazards relies on many partners, including state and local health departments. Personnel, surveillance systems, and education are important resources for investigating and responding to disease, monitoring for hazards, and educating public. Additional methods and greater capacity to measure and respond to environmental hazards are needed.

f) Global Environmental Health

Recognizing environmental health problems cross national boundaries and collaborating on solving the most pressing environmental health problems and improving the lives of the most vulnerable populations around the world are the efforts for creating environmental health globally.

Environmental health is a dynamic and evolving field. The intimate relationship between societies and ecosystems have, throughout history given rise to complex challenges to human health. Human health is dependent upon environmental exposures, yet the diversity and variation in exposures are poorly understood. Environmental exposure is increasing and affecting children's environmental health all over the world and emerging risks are being identified everyday. Increasing industrialization, explosive urban population growth, lack of pollution control, global climate change, ozone depletion, electromagnetic radiation, unabated waste dumping, non sustainable consumption of natural resources, unsafe use and contamination of chemicals, physical inactivity, poor nutrition, spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and use of dangerous substances all contribute to affecting the environment and health children (World Health Organization, 2019).

Understanding environment on human health is complex. In recent years, research has focused on a better grasp of the causal links between human health and the environment. However, many data gaps still exist that need to be filled to ensure this continues, such as consideration of real-time or more frequent data collections that gather and link data on human health and the natural environment, including determining causality, and monitoring trends and projections. Provision of data by small geographic area to measure human exposure to factors of the natural environment at local level is needed as well.

INTEGRATING DEVELOPMENT, THE ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

Determination of health include many factors such as biological and genetic, individual lifestyle, the natural and built environment, structure of society, policies and societal factors (Dahlgren & Whitehead, 1991). Health depends on the ability to understand and manage the interaction between human activities and the physical and biological environment. The resources and knowledge to meet current and future situation are not enough without action, it needs sustainability. Two concerns are vital. Development addressing people's need especially for health and ecological sustainability. Therefore, natural resources are not depleted and natural systems are not damaged or degraded. Meeting the needs of the present and future and future world population for food, water and energy without depleting or damaging the global resource base, while avoiding the adverse health and environmental consequences of industrialization and uncontrolled urbanization can be achieved only if people have the knowledge and the means to influence action.

This calls for changes in the way governments plan and manage development. In agriculture, research and extension services are required that are more participatory and more responsive to the needs of poor farmers. In urban areas participatory partnerships between local authorities and community need to be developed. People dependent on natural resources should be fully involved in decisions about their use and protection. All groups, including those who are living and working in the least healthy environments or are currently excluded from decisions about how resources should be used, should share in decision making and action.

Local participation needs national and global frameworks to ensure that adequate knowledge and resources are available and that local actions do not result in unsustainable burden on natural cycles and systems. It also requires intergovernmental agreements that limit

each country's call on finite resources and its right to dispose non biodegradable wastes. For this, people are needed whose concerns go beyond the quality of their own environment, only if they can press their governments to reach the international consensus on which a healthy and sustainable planet depends.

HEALTH DIPLOMACY IN ACTION: ENGAGING WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION WITH UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

UN Environment and WHO have agreed a new, wide ranging collaboration to accelerate action to curb environmental health risks that cause an estimated 12.6 million deaths a year. Mr Erik Solheim as the head of UN Environment and Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus as the director general of WHO signed an agreement to step up joint actions to combat air pollution, climate change and antimicrobial resistance, as well as improve coordination on water and chemicals management, water quality, food and nutrition issues (World Health Organization, 2019).

WHO and UN environment's collaboration created more systematic framework for joint research, development of tools and guidance, capacity building, monitoring of sustainable Development Goals, global and regional partnerships, and support to regional health and environment. These two agencies also follows a Ministerial Declaration on Health and Environment and Climate Change coalition at UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Cop 22 in Marrakesh, Morocco 2016. In 2018, United Nations Environment General Assembly (UNEA) which convenes environment ministers worldwide under topic "Towards a Pollution-Free Planet", adopted a resolution on Environment and Health. UNEA also called for expanded partnership with relevant UN agencies and partners especially WHO agencies for an implementation plan to tackle pollution for better health and environment.

These agencies need to work effective and more closely together to address the critical threats to environmental sustainability and health which are the foundation for life on this planet. This collaboration should continue and invite the relevant United Nations entities and stakeholders, including private sector and subject to the availability of resources encourage in developing integrated environment and health policies and measures, developing methods, tools, and guidelines to promote integrated environmental and health risks assessments, building on existing work in that regard. It also encourage member state and stakeholders to continue engaging, as appropriate in the work of ongoing intergovernmental regional processes on health

and environment in addressing the health and environment to achieve Sustainable Development Goals.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Health has always been important, not only for the individual, but also for the community as a whole. It has been defined as a human right in itself. In this regard the WHO acknowledges in its constitution (1946) that the *“Enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition.”* This article has been enshrined in many other legally binding Human rights conventions. In 2000, the UN committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights adopted a General Comment On The Right to Health, stating that this right extends beyond timely and appropriate health care to underlying determinants of health including safe drinking water and sanitation.

Therefore, all the stakeholders and partnership have to participate to tackle this challenges, and WHO should expand its partnership to ease in achieving its goals as stated in WHO constitution, in article 2 stated that *“ In order to achieve its objective, the functions of the organization shall be to furnish appropriate technical assistance and, in emergencies, necessary aid upon the request or acceptance of governments.”* As effort in achieving sustainable development goals, health can not be achieved without considering other aspects such as economic and trade which has impact related to global health, that’s why WHO creates the provision related that issues and stated that *“The purpose and scope of these regulation are to prevent, protect against, control and provide a public health response to international spread of disease in ways that are commensurate with and restricted to public health risks, and which avoid unnecessary interference with international traffic and trade.”*

CHALLENGES

a. Sanitation Challenge

“We shall not finally defeat AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria or any of the other infectious disease that plague the developing world until we have also won the battle for safe drinking water, sanitation, and basic health care.” That statement of mr. Kofi Annan member of UN

Secretary General. It shows that global health's goal mission by WHO can not be achieved if the environmental conditions are facing emergencies such as clean water, sanitation problems.

Nearly 40% of the world's population (2.4) billion have no access to hygienic means of personal sanitation. Globally, WHO estimates that 1.8 million people die each year from diarrhoeal disease, 200 million people are infected with schistosomiasis and more than 1 billion people suffer from soil-transmitted helminth infections. Even a special session on Children of United Nations General Assembly (2002) reported that nearly 5.500 children die everyday from diseases caused by contaminated food and water. Increasing access sanitation and improving hygienic behaviours are key to reducing this enormous disease burden. In addition, such changes would increase school attendance and help children to learn better. As the goal of WHO to provide children health and encouraging their better life. Inadequate sanitation impacts individuals, households, communities and countries. Simply having sanitation increases health, well being and economic productivity.

Sanitation and hygiene are challenges that will not go away for night. Over time, new ideas and approaches will emerge and old ideas will be improved. Gradually, the balance will shift until good hygiene and access to sanitation become the norm all over the world. Real progress requires concerted efforts from all actors. WHO and its partnership, national and local government communities, household, entrepreneurs are working together to achieve the internationally agreed goals and targets in environmental health and better planet.

b. Poverty eradication and Income inequality challenges

Poor people became trapped in poverty for a number of reasons including the inability to access credit or own land, governance failures, and because low level education, skills or health hinder their ability to seize opportunities arising from a general expansion of economic activity. The poor also tend to be more vulnerable to economic shocks mainly due to health events as well as weather related natural disasters and broad economic crises that push households below the poverty line and keep them there. While globalization is associated with increasing average incomes in many countries, there is concern that it also causing widening income inequality between and within countries. Income inequality affects all countries around the world, and there is clear evidence that people with lower income have worse health outcomes across a broad range of indicators.

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c. Globalization and Trade

Globalization has both positive and negative implications for global health. It is likely that the growth in the world trade has also led to job and income growth but in the other hands, globalization also has implications for epidemiology, notably by facilitating the spread of communicable disease and associated risks due to increased movement of people and goods around the globe. For example through international travel and migration and trade in animals and goods. For instance, low income countries may lose health workers, but globalization may enable faster, coordinated action against health threats.

SOLUTION

WHO have to strengthen its collaboration with UNEP in order to accelerate action towards achieving a pollution-free planet, reducing global pollution and related risks to human health and environment. This two agencies actions on environment and health agenda need to be scaled up through the promotion measures that address pollution in a coordinated, synergistic and impactful way. Not only that, but also linking health and environment to the green economy strategies. WHO and UNEP should expand their partnership with other institution in different area such as economic fields to create sustainable development goals. Greening economy is expected to create a series of health, economic social and environmental benefits, including reduction of greenhouse gas emission.

As well as poverty matters, ensuring that investing in health is perceived as a necessary and effective way to combat poverty and ensure economic progress requires an ongoing dialogue between health and finance executive bodies. One way to open and maintain that dialogue is to demonstrate an awareness of fiscal constraints to establish credibility by generating and using evidence to show that we can make efficient use of resources to deliver optimal services. To deliver in other words, “more health for the money”.

The capacity of countries and stakeholders need to be further enhanced through the provision of knowledge, capacity and tools on the environmental health. WHO should provide and facilitate the exchange of experiences and best practices among the region. Regarding it is the key to strengthen environmental governance which will enable regional and national policy actions through health and environmental processes to be enhanced.

CONCLUSION

The environment can directly impact on people health and well being. People need safe, healthy and supportive environment for their health, which is duties of WHO as the only international organization which has mandate for pursuing public health. Nowadays, WHO has been active in campaigning environmental health, building partnership with other agencies to create environmental health and achieve Sustainable Development Goals, knowing as health as the measure of Sustainable Development Vision.

The Sustainable Development Goals are not only target for WHO but for all agencies in different aspects. In regard of creating environmental health, as the only global agency with the mandate to cover the whole health agenda, WHO should continue to work closely with other partners in the UN family and beyond, and target- specific work is should be strengthened as well.

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