



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF DENMARK



Danish Government response to the EU Commission's public consultation on the EU strategic framework for global health

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The Danish Government welcomes the opportunity to comment on the European Commission's public consultation on the EU strategic framework for global health.

Significant changes in global health and geopolitics have taken place since the European Commission's 2010 Communication 'The EU Role in Global Health'. The Danish Government thus fully supports the initiative to develop a new EU strategic framework for global health.

The European Commission's initial priorities listed in the Call for Evidence are important and aligns with the Government of Denmark's overall priorities. The Government of Denmark recognises that the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing structural weaknesses and inequalities in health systems and response mechanisms in Europe and globally, not least in fragile areas. The pandemic revealed that global health challenges require a comprehensive and coordinated response. To that end, the pandemic demonstrated how the international dimension of EU health policy has become a crucial part of the EU's external action.

The Danish Government proposes that the new EU strategic framework for global health sets an ambitious vision for the EU's role in global health. The following five global health challenges remain top priorities to tackle in order to achieve progress in global health. Building on partnerships and strengthening the Team Europe approach will be key to successful implementation of the strategic framework.

1. Strengthen global prevention, preparedness and response to health crises based on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic

The economic and social disruption from COVID-19 has been devastating and the loss of human lives staggering. One crucial lesson learned from the pandemic is that health systems across the world are not strong nor resilient enough to handle global health emergencies. There is an urgent need to address these issues in order to strengthen global health security. In collaboration with relevant partners, the EU should provide local, national and global support for health-system capacity building, including the full implementation of the International Health Regulations (IHR) and other relevant instruments, as a tool to enhance local, national and global responses to health emergencies based on experience and evidence from the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Ensure a One Health approach to antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and other future health crises

The increasing incidence of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) represents a major global challenge. Globally, it is estimated that AMR already cause more than 1.2 million deaths each year; a number that is predicted to dramatically increase if radical action

is not taken. The burden of AMR is the greatest in low- and middle-income countries, but generally, AMR transcends borders. This calls for international action against AMR. Moreover, AMR threatens our ability to reach the health-related Sustainable Development Goals incl. the improvement of maternal health and reduction of child mortality. It further increases the risk of undermining medical achievements in the treatment of other non-communicable diseases such as cancer. Finally, AMR is a challenge that operates between the human, animal and environmental sectors. Such complex, international and intersectoral nature of the issue calls for a global effort with a One Health approach with coordinated and integrated actions across the human, animal and environmental sectors.

3. Strengthen health systems and ensuring universal health coverage (UHC), including safeguarding sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (NCDs)

Capacity development of national institutions and primary health care is key to building more resilient health systems. Ensuring equal access for all to health services of high quality, including essential medicines and vaccines, should thus remain a key priority. This includes enhanced access for women and girls to sexual and reproductive health services which should be a high priority. Addressing the multiple and intersectional barriers for increased access to service delivery such as bodily autonomy, access to comprehensive sexuality education and counselling, contraception, safe abortion and protection against sexual and gender-based violence, including child marriage, is of outmost importance. SRHR is not only about girls and women. Men and boys also have such rights and play an important role in securing SRHR access for all. Furthermore, primary health systems play an essential role in the prevention and control of NCDs, including strengthening mental health. The EU and multilateral organisations, particularly the UN, should thus support stronger health systems, including at a community and local level to achieve UHC.

4. Strengthen EU leadership and multilateral collaboration in global health incl. through effective financing and a strengthened and reformed WHO

Addressing the financing gap in global health is an important part of strengthening global health security and an essential tool to advance common priorities. Team Europe remains one of the largest contributors on global health in the world and should accordingly play a leading role in a stronger global health infrastructure. Denmark supports a strengthened and reformed WHO, as well as the establishment of a global pandemic treaty. Un-earmarked, core funding is necessary for the WHO's continued leadership position within the global health architecture and to achieve WHO's Triple Billion Targets.

5. Strengthening private-public partnerships to prevent and respond to cross-border health threats and harness research and innovation

The EU should continue to ensure strong partnerships with non-EU partners, including the private sector, philanthropic actors and civil society and advocate for solidarity in the response to global health challenges. The private sector is an important partner and plays a key role in developing innovative solutions for global health challenges. Strengthening public-private partnerships is key to prevent and respond to cross-border health challenges e.g. by promoting resilient supply chains of critical

healthcare products; strengthen research and commercial innovation; and promote a just and sustainable development.

The Government of Denmark agrees that the new strategic framework should reinforce the Team Europe approach as an important modality and strengthen the existing Team Europe Initiatives (TEIs) on health. Shared analysis, based on mutual exchanges of information and coordination of positions are key components of the TEIs. To unfold the potential of the TEIs it is therefore important to have designated leadership within each TEI. Strengthening the role of Member States in convening, elaborating and implementing the TEIs should thus be further explored.

The Government of Denmark recognises the need to focus on other key global health issues such as HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases, vaccines and immunization, maternal and child health-programmes, active and coordinated responses to the current global food-crisis as well as the implementation of WASH-programmes.

The new strategic framework must take an inclusive approach and take into account the need to reduce inequalities in health by reaching the most marginalised and vulnerable, including those living in fragile areas, and hence to adhere to the principle of leaving no-one behind.

Finally, the Government of Denmark recognises that the involvement of Member States in the process of forming the new EU strategic framework for global health is essential to a successful outcome and anticipates and welcomes an inclusive consultation process in the forthcoming months.