

A MORE STRATEGIC FOCUS

Improving Health Outcomes

Canada will assist countries to improve health outcomes, particularly among the poorest, through a focus on: preventing and controlling high-burden, communicable, poverty-linked diseases (especially HIV/AIDS); strengthening the capacity of health systems; improving infant and child health; strengthening sexual and reproductive health; and improving food security.

The MDGs represent a strong international consensus on the importance of reducing child and maternal mortality and combatting HIV/AIDS, malaria and other major diseases. It is also internationally recognized that progress in health outcomes has important multiplier effects for other MDGs.



A tuberculosis patient takes her medicine under the supervision of a nurse at the Ica Regional Health Centre in Ica, Peru.

The demand for assistance for basic health systems and programs is strongest from the poorest countries, especially those faced with endemic and pandemic infectious diseases. In addition to the general societal burden resulting from the diminished labour capacity of those who are ill and those who must care for the ill, without addressing fundamental health issues such as the HIV/AIDS pandemic in sub-Saharan Africa, there is little hope of making progress in areas such as education (without local teachers), governance (without local leaders) and private sector development (without local business people). Focusing on high-burden and high-mortality diseases such as HIV/AIDS is the most urgent priority of many of these countries, with the greatest potential impact on lives and livelihoods.

Canada has demonstrated expertise in health systems, particularly in the promotion of equitable, universal and accessible health care for all citizens. Internationally, Canada has played a leadership role by, for example: chairing the governing body of the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS); providing additional support to the UN Fund for Population Activities, and giving \$342 million in additional funding in 2004-05 to global programs to combat infectious diseases including HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and polio. Canada also was the lead donor in providing \$100 million to the WHO 3 by 5 Initiative, which seeks to provide anti-retroviral treatment to three million people living with HIV/AIDS in developing countries by 2005. In addition, Canada has supported innovative approaches to protecting women and girls from HIV—with measures they themselves can control—as the leading donor to the International Partnership for Microbicides, which aims to develop safe and effective topical anti-HIV microbicides. Canadian capacities in health information and early warning can be key assets in protecting populations in developing countries and also in preventing the global spread of infectious diseases.

The Government's efforts to improve health and combat HIV/AIDS will focus on issues in five areas:

- **Prevention and control of high-burden, communicable, poverty-linked diseases, including HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, co-infections and river blindness.** These diseases are both a crippling burden on poor societies and a preventable one. Canada will support