

The NDPHS holds a ministerial-level conference, discusses main challenges to health and social well-being in the region and sets priorities for the future regional cooperation

Helsinki, Finland – today, Ms. Susanna Huovinen, Minister of Health and Social Services of Finland, hosted and chaired the 10th annual conference of the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being, NDPHS. The event was attended by ministers responsible for health and social affairs and other high representatives of countries and organisations being members of the NDPHS.

In marking the tenth anniversary of the NDPHS, **the Conference appraised the progress and achievements of the Partnership over the past decade, discussed the current and foreseen shared regional challenges to health and social well-being and, finally, set priorities for NDPHS for the coming years.** More in-depth roundtable discussions were also held on two selected topics – the impact of the HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis on people and economies in the Northern Dimension countries as well as occupational accidents in these countries.

The Conference expressed its satisfaction with the progress made by the Partnership: a wide array of concrete and pragmatic activities were run by the Partnership ranging from high-level ministerial dialogue and policy shaping, to efforts to raise the profile of health and social well-being on the regional agenda, to project development and implementation as well as outreach and support to and engagement of interested actors operating in the Northern Dimension area. The unique role that the NDPHS performs as the linking agent in the region for cooperation in health and social well-being, helping bridge priorities and efforts related to policies and strategies was also underlined.

Having discussed current and foreseen regional challenges, the Conference agreed that, in developing and implementing the NDPHS Strategy for 2014-2020, the Partnership shall continue efforts to bring added value and achieve tangible results with measurable impact and, in doing so, shall focus on the following priority areas, where opportunities and serious challenges exist:

- Antimicrobial resistance;
- HIV/AIDS and associated infections;
- Non-communicable diseases;
- Alcohol and substance abuse;
- Occupational safety and health and well-being at work;
- Primary health care.

The Conference discussed the outcome of its side-event, the conference “Combating HIV and TB through a joint regional action,” which was organised by the NDPHS the day before the Partnership Annual Conference. It shared the participants' view that the increasing number of HIV and TB co-infections, multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDR TB) and

extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis (XDR TB) cases, and other associated infections pose a serious challenge and threat to public health in the Northern Dimension area. Having agreed it is imperative that the governments in the region recognise their responsibilities and renew their commitment in this area, the Conference adopted the NDPHS Statement “Impact of the HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis on people and economies of the Northern Dimension Countries – status quo and the way forward.”

Discussions also revolved around the issues of underreporting of occupational accidents, low safety and health awareness, and funding and resources for occupational safety and health activities in the Northern Dimension area. To that end, the Conference emphasised the need for actions by the NDPHS Countries to review the coverage and efficiency of their reporting systems and encouraged them to proceed with the ratification of the ILO Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention 187 and with the application of the ILO Protocol to Conventions 155 related to systems for notification and recording of accidents.

Finally, the Conference thanked Finland for successfully chairing the Partnership during its two-year term and elected Germany as the Partnership Chair and Estonia as the Co-Chair for the next two years.

View our website at www.ndphs.org, where you can also read the [Chair's Conclusions from the above Conference](#),¹ and keep an eye on policy developments and explore the world of the NDPHS – a partnership committed to achieving tangible results!

Further information:

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¹ Available at http://www.ndphs.org/?download,7270,PAC_10_Conclusions_by_the_Chair.pdf.