Submission of the World Bank Group

Health plays a pivotal role in economic and human development and in poverty alleviation. Improvements in health and wellbeing are foundational contributors to global economic growth.  At the same time, improved economic growth has enabled improvements in health outcomes, creating a virtuous cycle as good health boosts economic growth, and economic growth enables further gains in health.  The dramatic increases in development assistance for health and shifts in the major players involved in the global health architecture show the widespread recognition of the tight link between investments in health and economic development, and of the importance of SDG 3 on health.

The World Bank Group’s Global Practice on Health, Nutrition and Population is directly addressing SDG 3, as well as contributing to other cross-cutting health goals, through its Priority Directions strategy. The goal of our health work is Universal Health Coverage (UHC), which provides an umbrella for Bank Group efforts with governments and development partners to ensure that all people can access quality, affordable care without suffering financial hardship. UHC is an essential part of SDG 3 and is a key driver of SDG 1 on ending poverty: hundreds of millions of people are impoverished by healthcare costs every year, and if that is not addressed we will not be successful in our common SDG goal of ending poverty.  WBG work spans the areas of direct investment in countries, analytical work and knowledge production; and convening.

In the area of investments, the World Bank Group’s HNP portfolio covers about $12 billion of investment in 74 countries, as of 2016.  In the area of global knowledge production, the World Bank Group is collaborating with the WHO to monitor progress on UHC globally.  A first joint *UHC global monitoring report* was produced in 2015, with the next planned for December 2017. The global UHC Forum, co-hosted by the Japanese government, WHO, UHC2030, and the Bank Group and UNICEF will be held in December 2017 in Tokyo, to report on and stimulate global and country-level progress.

In addition, the World Bank convenes annually at the WBG-IMF Spring Meetings a conversation with finance and health ministers and other key stakeholders about how to sustainably finance UHC.

          The *International Health Partnership for UHC 2030* provides a multi-stakeholder platform to strengthen collaboration and contribute to resilient, sustainable and equitable health systems, which are key to achieving UHC and global health security by 2030. The Bank Group and WHO co-host its secretariat. The Bank Group also worked the WHO and the governments of Germany and Japan on a paper entitled *Healthy Systems for Universal Health Coverage*, released in May this year, to provide a foundation for the UHC2030 and its work program. This will help shape health system strengthening efforts by multilateral agencies and bilateral partners, stimulate further dialogue and work to accelerate progress towards UHC at the country level, and increase alignment of efforts by development partners.

At the *Sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD-VI*) in August 2016, African heads of state and partners vowed to accelerate progress toward UHC in Africa. To help countries implement their health reforms, the Bank Group and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria (Global Fund) *committed to jointly investing $24 billion in Africa* over the next three to five years.

                    Also in connection with SDG 3, the Bank Group hosts the secretariat of the *Global Financing Facility (GFF),* the main financing vehicle for the UN Secretary General’s *Every Woman Every Child* initiative. It is a partnership of a broad set of public and private sector stakeholders that are involved in reproductive, maternal, child, and adolescent health response. The GFF is working to help ensure that every woman and child has access to health care as well as harmonizing fragmented reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health (RMNCAH) approaches.

Another focus area of the Bank Group that is addressing SDG 3 is helping countries with the strengthening of their health systems and pandemic readiness. A severe pandemic can result in millions of deaths, and even the most conservative estimates suggest that pandemics destroy up to 1% of global GDP, which is comparable to other top-priority threats, such as climate change. In response, IDA 18 includes commitments for strengthening pandemic preparedness: The Bank Group will support at least 25 countries’ efforts to strengthen their public health systems to reduce and manage risks that pandemics pose, as well as develop their capacity to prioritize and institutionalize pandemic preparedness plans. In addition, the Bank Group recently launched the *Pandemic Emergency Financing Facility (PEF)*, an innovative, fast disbursing global financing mechanism designed to protect the world against deadly pandemics. The PEF will accelerate both global and national responses to future outbreaks.

            The Bank Group also works to ensure that those in volatile environments still have access to basic health and nutrition services. Fragility, conflict, and violence (FCV) can pose a major challenge to delivering these services, cutting off health care when it’s needed most. In Yemen, for example, Bank Group funding has been used by UNICEF and WHO to provide support for the delivery of critical health services such as national polio campaigns, and maternal and child health and nutrition services. Funding has also been mobilized to combat the recent cholera outbreak.

The World Bank Group’s Global Practice on Health, Nutrition and Population is directly addressing SDG 3, as well as contributing to other cross-cutting health goals, through its Priority Directions strategy. Our job is to protect and support the poor and to help governments in their efforts to improve peoples’ lives.  Through this commitment, we can help to enhance the lives of the disadvantaged and the vulnerable.