

B2. HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE, INCLUDING REVERSING THE BRAIN DRAIN

(iv) Health

123. Objectives

- To strengthen programmes for containing communicable diseases, so that they do not fall short of the scale required in order to reduce the burden of disease;
- To have a secure health system that meets needs and supports disease control effectively;
- To ensure the necessary support capacity for the sustainable development of an effective health care delivery system;
- To empower the people of Africa to act to improve their own health and to achieve health literacy;
- To successfully reduce the burden of disease on the poorest people in Africa;
- To encourage cooperation between medical doctors and traditional practitioners.

124. Actions

- Strengthen Africa's participation in processes aimed at procuring affordable drugs, including those involving the international pharmaceutical companies and the international civil society, and explore the use of alternative delivery systems for essential drugs and supplies;
- Mobilise the resources required to build effective disease interventions and secure health systems;
- Lead the campaign for increased international financial support for the struggle against HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases;
- Join forces with other international agencies such as the World Health Organisation

(WHO) and donors to ensure that support for the continent is increased by at least US \$10 billion per annum;

- Encourage African countries to give higher priority to health in their own budgets and to phase in such increases in expenditure to a level to be mutually determined;
- Jointly mobilise resources for capacity-building in order to enable all African countries to improve their health infrastructures and management.

125. Africa is home to major endemic diseases. Bacteria and parasites carried by insects, the movement of people and other carriers thrive, favoured as they are by weak environmental policies and poor living conditions. One of the major impediments facing African development efforts is the widespread incidence of communicable diseases, in particular HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. Unless these epidemics are brought under control, real gains in human development will remain an impossible hope.

126. In the health sector, Africa compares very poorly with the rest of the world. In 1997, child and juvenile death rates were 105 and 169 per 1000, as against 6 and 7 per 1000 respectively in developed countries. Life expectancy is 48.9 years, as against 77.7 years in developed countries. Only 16 doctors are available per 100 000 inhabitants, as against 253 in industrialised countries. Poverty, reflected in very low per capita incomes, is one of the major factors limiting the populations' capacity to address their health problems.

127. Nutrition is an important ingredient of good health. The average daily intake of calories varies from 2384 in low-income countries to 2846 in middle-income countries, to 3390 in countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

128. Health, defined by the WHO as a state of complete physical and mental well-being, contributes to increase in productivity and, consequently, to economic growth. The most obvious effects of health improvement on the working population are the reduction in lost working days due to sick leave, the increase in productivity and the chance to secure better-paid jobs. Eventually, improvement in health and nutrition directly contributes to improved well-being as the spread of diseases is controlled, infant mortality rates are reduced and life expectancy is higher. The link with poverty reduction is clearly established.