

**Action Items to Advance Urban Health in the Sustainable Development Goals: Recommendations from the
International Society for Urban Health at the New York Academy of Medicine
(June 30, 2015)**

The International Society of Urban Health at the New York Academy of Medicine – representing experts across disciplines, practitioners across sectors, and representatives of civil society organizations from around the world committed to advancing the health of people in cities, held its annual International Conference on Urban Health in Dhaka, Bangladesh, in May of 2015.

Participants developed and approved the following recommendations for consideration by Member States, recognizing:

- a) That more than half of the world's population lives in cities and by 2050 it is estimated that 70% of the world's population will be urban dwellers
- b) The growing importance of cities in achieving sustainable development
- c) The role of health as both input for and outcome of development
- d) That the health of people living in cities is affected by multiple factors
- e) That decisions made in all sectors, especially the built and natural environment, economic development, education and transportation, can have positive or negative effects on human health, and
- f) That healthy people are critical to social and economic development

I. Recommendations for including “urban health” in the Sustainable Development Goals:

- A. In the political declaration that will preface the Goals, refer specifically to the critical importance of the health of urban dwellers to achieving the SDGs
- B. Mainstream consideration of the unique opportunities and challenges of urban environments across the SDGs
- C. Since many of the targets proposed in Goal 11 (*Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*) are determinants of health, include a commitment in Goal 11 that solutions chosen have a positive impact on human health and do not adversely affect health of people in cities
- D. Since achieving the health targets in Goal 3 (*Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages*) will require explicit attention to the unique health risks faced by urban dwellers, ensure that Goal 3 explicitly recognizes the need for interventions that address the effects of urban diversity, complexity, density and disparities on the determinants of health.

II. Recommendations for national level implementation and monitoring of progress toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals:

- A. Develop and implement a national-level health policy that integrates planning for rural and urban areas, and recognizes the importance of city and local level data and action to advance urban health.
- B. Support strong and effective governance to promote urban health, including clear roles for city and local government and a strong public health infrastructure that can work in partnership with other sectors to prevent and mitigate potential risks and benefits to health of policies, programs, and investments across sectors (a Health-In-All approach).
- C. Establish and track national level targets and indicators that reflect progress towards urban health and health equity.