



15th World Congress on Public Health

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Politics, Policies and Processes: Advancing Complex Policy Agendas – the case of the WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health

Monday 3 April 2017, 1330 – 1530, Plenary Hall 1

Lead	Professor Sharon Friel, Australian National University
Speakers	Professor Fran Baum, Flinders University
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It is almost ten years since the global Commission on Social Determinants of Health (CSDH) reported to the WHO. The CSDH assembled evidence on what could be done to achieve better and more fairly distributed health worldwide through action on the social determinants. The three major conclusions and associated recommendations of the CSDH were that i) inequities in the daily circumstances in which people are born, grow, live, work and age affect health inequities within and between countries; ii) the conditions of daily life are influenced by inequities in 'structural drivers' of power, money and resources; and iii) there is a need to expand the knowledge base on the social determinants of health, evaluate action taken and develop a workforce that is trained in addressing the social determinants of health.

The CSDH involved a large orchestra of key change-agents and policy actors in many different types of institutions across the world. Commissioners guided the work of the CSDH. With their experience they brought an understanding of realpolitik in different geo-political, institutional and socio-cultural contexts and depth of knowledge relating to health equity. Leading academic institutions globally formed networks of research around thematic areas. The CSDH learnt about the process of policy development and implementation from the experience of countries through policy-makers and practitioners. Civil society organizations contributed learning on how to effect social change through community engagement and advocacy and added grass-roots analysis of the impact of social determinants. The structure of the CSDH was deliberately designed to create a shared ownership of the issues and





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knowledge, thereby encouraging adaptation and implementation of the recommendations and ongoing pursuit of health equity.

In this session we will explore from different policy actors perspectives, if and how the momentum and evidence that was generated by the CSDH has affected action on the social determinants at the global level and within countries and institutions. The aim of the session is to identify the types of action that have been taken to address health inequity; the forms of governance that helped pursue a health equity agenda, and what the future challenges and opportunities are for action on the social determinants of health equity.

