

# Statement from HE the Ambassador of the Netherlands Henk Jan Bakker

The Dutch Ambassador poses questions on the role of development assistance, domestic resources and transformative partnerships in health

I am very happy and delighted to be at the closing ceremony of this Special Consultation on Governance for Health in Africa. Focus on leadership and governance is absolutely in line with the strategic direction for African Centre for Global Health and Social Transformation (ACHEST) in the Health Systems Advocacy Partnership (HSAP) project. HSAP is funded by the Netherlands Government. All this is in line with the long-term vision of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs to improve health and health systems across the continent with a focus on increasing access to sexual and reproductive health services and rights.

We all know that efficient health systems are critical for achieving universal health coverage and ultimately Sustainable Development Goal 3 on health and wellbeing for all and SDG 5 on gender equality. The role and contribution of good governance, leadership, human resources to having such a system cannot be underestimated. I hear your call for new and better indicators which focus on prevention. Indicators that measure the actual health and wellbeing of a population rather than how much money you spend on health interventions are key to promoting UHC. I am sure this will be reflected in the documents that come from this meeting and it is a message that I take and convey to my ministry back in the Hague because it is a very important one. So this is why the Dutch Government supports health projects such as the Health Systems Advocacy Project. I take this opportunity to commend ACHEST for organising this important consultative meeting.

## Deliberating on health systems

This meeting was convened for selected African health leaders and partners to undertake in-depth review of the opportunities and challenges in governance for health globally and their implications for Africa. It's a timely engagement in view of ongoing global conversations to development of systems for health and the need to answer a number of questions. It is my hope that you will deliberate on the following questions: How best to focus development assistance for health or equitable health gains; how to deliver health assistance to strengthen health systems; and how to spot domestic resources and transformative partnerships for sustainable impact.



*Henk Jan Bakker, Netherlands Ambassador, at the Special Consultation.*

This meeting has brought together the right people who have answers to such global questions. That's quite a task; my goal for meetings like this is to remain focused on the questions at a higher level and I hope this will be achieved. We look forward to reviewing the outcomes and recommendations of the meeting as a source of information for our own future policy development. I will be very happy to receive the report of this consultation and pass it on to my government.

As a government, we remain committed to the health agenda in our new policy framework which is being developed currently within my ministry. Sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender and equality and women's rights are key elements. Our partnerships remain one of the instruments in achieving those policy results. There will be a call for applications in September this year from my headquarters in the Hague so watch that space.

I would also like to take this opportunity to commend the efforts of state and non-state actors in Uganda for the advancement of the SDGs and universal health care. I look forward to seeing a multi-sectoral approach in tackling the health challenges and securing lasting policy packages for the country and the continent. I agree that those lofty goals of 60 years ago have not been achieved in Africa; neither have they been achieved in my country. Those goals continue to be a challenge for all of us and we need to double our effort to achieve them. Thank you for putting all these minds together.