G2O
BRASIL 2024
BUILDING A JUST WORLD
AND A SUSTAINABLE PLANET

Joint Finance and Health Ministerial Meeting (JFHMM)

SUMMARY

G20/World Health Organization Policy Note on Social Determinants of Health

October 2024

BACKGROUND

The Joint Finance and Health Task Force (JFHTF) developed the Framework for Economic Vulnerabilities and Risks (FEVR), during India's G20 Presidency in 2023, to evaluate health, social, and economic risks related to pandemics. The 2024 Brazil Presidency has further prioritised addressing inequities, particularly through the lens of social determinants of health (SDH), under Priority 1: *Unpacking the centrality of financing initiatives designed to tackle SDH,* which encompass also non-medical factors impacting health such as socioeconomic status, housing, and education.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH IN PANDEMIC PREVENTION, PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE (PPPR)

Vulnerable and marginalised groups such as children, women, the elderly, people with disability and informal sector workers are disproportionately affected by pandemics. Evidence shows that COVID-19 mortality rates were multiple times higher among lower socioeconomic groups. These populations often face barriers to accessing health information, services, and medicines and treatments. SDH, including income security and housing stability, affect their ability to follow public health measures, such as handwashing and movement restrictions. During the COVID-19 pandemic, macroeconomic conditions led to increased social risks such as food insecurity and housing instability, exacerbating existing inequalities. Addressing SDH can help mitigate these vulnerabilities and improve pandemic outcomes. Investing in universal social protection through cash payments and subsidised services can reduce poverty, improve access to essential services, and bolster overall health, social and economic resilience.

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH INDICATORS FOR CONSIDERATION IN FEVR

In 2024, the World Health Organization released the *Operational Framework for Monitoring Social Determinants of Health Equity,* offering guidance on tracking SDH and their impacts. Consequently, specific SDH indicators have been proposed to be included in the FEVR, focusing on key areas of social protection, physical environment, and education. Regularly assessing these indicators can help countries enhance policies for Pandemic PPR by identifying investments in these areas which may lie outside health policy.

PROPOSED INDICATORS:

Domain: Social Protection

Social protection is critical to mitigate health and socio-economic shocks from a pandemic emergency and unintended negative consequences of PHSM.

1. Coverage of social safety net programmes (% of population)

2. Proportion of population covered by at least one social protection benefit (%)

Domain: Physical Environment

People living in overcrowded housing conditions are at increased risk for morbidity and mortality from communicable diseases.

Safely managed drinking water, sanitation and hygiene services are vital to human health. Frequent and proper hand hygiene is essential to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

1. Proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing (%)

2. Population using safely managed sanitation services (%)

Domain: Education

Schools are high contact environments; ii) during COVID-19 pandemic school closures and lack of access to education was one of the main challenges of PHSM; iii) access to education measures have relevance also for gender equality if stratified by gender; v) schools can be a route for children and families to access Primary Health Care e.g. vaccinations.

1. Education completion rate (primary education, lower secondary and upper secondary) (%)

2. Net school enrolment rate (pre-primary, primary, secondary, tertiary) (%)

UPDATES FOLLOWING DISCUSSIONS AND COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS

On the basis of comments and requirements for data robustness and balance in number of indicators, the following indicators were included in the final list of FEVR indicators:

- Proportion of population covered by at least one social protection benefit (%)

- Proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing (%)

- Population using safely managed sanitation services (%)

- Net school enrolment rate (pre-primary, primary, secondary, tertiary) (%)

Any development of policies will require a significant amount of further analysis which will require further use of data and multiple indicators relating to the social determinants of health. The current indicators are intended to provide the key insights that will support further in-depth development of policy options and assessment of the benefits of investments.