

# IS THIS ANOTHER FAILED ROMANCE?

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Dear Editor,

In October 2018, 40 years since the first conference, the Second International Primary Health Care Conference will be held in Astana, Kazakhstan. The draft paper prepared before the conference was submitted to us for our opinion prior to April 23<sup>rd</sup>. On this occasion, it is useful to remember the declaration published in 1978 and look at what has changed since then.

Since the first conference, the importance of keeping the issue focused on the agenda of health authorities at the local level to announce their importance cannot be denied.

When the first conference was held in Alma-Ata in September 1978, the Soviet Union had not yet collapsed. The paper, published after the conference and supported by WHO, had historical significance because it was the first paper to be published in the field of primary health care. As such, it emphasised the importance of primary health care services and the need for governments and individuals to take responsibility for achieving the goal of 'health for all'.

The first article of the Alma-Ata statement was devoted to the definition of health. Health was defined as 'complete wellbeing', rather than a lack of illness, and also as a 'fundamental human right'. Moreover, 'the attainment of the highest possible level of health' was defined as a social goal for the entire world. Perhaps the most striking point of the paper was the 'health for all' target set for 2000 and the drawing of attention to the fact that primary health care is an essential part of a country's social and economic development.

The tearing down of the Berlin Wall and 'super earth' (the new planet), which was launched by NASA this year, were the principal developments of the last 40 years. But, regrettably, there was no progress in the goals of health of the world.

The draft declaration begins by revealing the fact that the health targets for all could not be reached within

40 years. While emphasising changing health problems, such as aging populations, urbanisation, globalisation, rising inequities, increase in chronic diseases, multimorbidity, increasing antimicrobial resistance, complex emergencies, war, violence, climate change, migration, increasing cost of health systems, rising expectations of people, enlarging role of the private sector, innovation, technological revolution and the information age, the need for primary health care services is emphasised more than ever before. The fundamentals of primary care are explained in detail and submitted as a program to all countries. The goal of 'health for all' for the upcoming future seems the same as before. But in this declaration, it would be better if we formulated it as 'sustainable primary health care for all'.

As long as we define health as a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing, in the face of all these wars, violence and poverty, to have a health goal for all reminds us of Queen's lyrics 'another failed romance'.

In both declarations, it is emphasised that health is not only a matter of concern to the medical community, it is also the most basic human right, and also plays a key role in economic and social development. As such, it is indispensable for better quality of life and world peace. Therefore, in the last part, there is a call for all stakeholders to take part in this action, give support and work together for the internationally agreed sustainable goals. Who are the addressees?

Governments, WHO, UNICEF and other international organisations, as well as multilateral and bilateral agencies, nongovernmental organisations, funding agencies, all health workers and the whole world community...

This time is here for a commitment that is effective, urgent and prioritises technical and financial support in developing countries...

We hope to see that the next conference will be held with a brand new agenda.