

World Health Organization, Geneva

11th September 2006

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to express my support, on behalf of the World Health Organization, for the global campaign *Healthcare Information For All by 2015*: 'By 2015, every person worldwide will have access to an informed healthcare provider'. This campaign has the potential to make a substantial impact on the quality of healthcare in developing countries and countries in transition. Progress in meeting the campaign objective is vital if we are to achieve the broader Millennium Development Goals.

As I have stated recently with others: "Applying what we know already will have a bigger impact on health and disease than any drug or technology likely to be introduced in the next decade. If disease is to be defeated, existing knowledge must be applied in ways that will improve health care, especially in developing countries... The 15th challenge is to ensure that everyone in the world can have access to clean, clear knowledge - a basic human right, and a public health need as important as access to clean, clear water, and much more easily achievable." (Pang T, Gray M, Evans T. A 15th grand challenge for global public health. *Lancet* 2006; 367:2846)

Healthcare Information For All by 2015 will address a fundamental part of 'the 15th challenge': the healthcare information needs of family care givers, primary health workers, and staff of district hospitals - it is at these levels where most healthcare - including most *unsafe* healthcare - takes place; and it is at these levels that the majority of avoidable deaths occur. These healthcare providers are also the least well served and the most neglected in terms of availability and application of healthcare knowledge. It is here that knowledge can make the greatest difference in terms of lives saved and reduced suffering and disability.

Healthcare Information For All by 2015 is an ambitious goal but it can be achieved if all stakeholders work together. The approach proposed by the Global Healthcare Information Network (www.ghi-net.org) and its partners is innovative and promises to harness the international cooperation and understanding needed to achieve the goal. It also represents a concerted effort to implement a key recommendation of the Ministerial Summit on Health Research in Mexico in November, 2004 to increase public trust and confidence in science - if healthcare providers have better access to healthcare knowledge and information, they can serve the public more effectively.

I support the global campaign *Healthcare Information For All by 2015* and urge others to do the same.

Sincerely,



Dr Tikki Pang,
Director,
Research Policy and Cooperation.