

In a major achievement for global public health advocates, governments around the world have committed themselves to alleviating the unnecessary death and disability caused by infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria.

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Public HEALTH Watch

“Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family.”

—Article 25, Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
December 1948

Public Health Watch is dedicated to making sure that they do.

OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE

The Open Society Institute, a private operating and grantmaking foundation, aims to shape public policy to promote democratic governance, human rights, and economic, legal, and social reform. On a local level, OSI implements a range of initiatives to support the rule of law, education, public health, and independent media. At the same time, OSI works to build alliances across borders and continents on issues such as combating corruption and rights abuses.

OSI was created in 1993 by investor and philanthropist George Soros to support his foundations in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Those foundations were established, starting in 1984, to help countries make the transition from communism. OSI has expanded the activities of the Soros foundations network to other areas of the world where the transition to democracy is of particular concern. The Soros foundations network encompasses more than 60 countries, including the United States.

Promoting informed public participation in the development, implementation, and evaluation of health policies

A Project of the Public Health Program



“We resolve to have, by 2015, halted, and begun to reverse, the spread of AIDS, the scourge of malaria, and other major diseases that afflict humanity.”

—United Nations Millennium Declaration, General Assembly
Resolution 55/2, 2000

Public Health Watch

Objectives

Monitoring Projects

“Perhaps the most important lesson of all from recent experience in public health is that improving people’s lives remains the bottom line. . . . Despite the months of work they take, negotiating treaties and targets is the easy bit. Putting them into practice is the hard part. . . . Agreeing on what constitutes the right to health is an important step, but making sure that right is protected or realized is the step that makes the difference.”

—Former WHO Director General Dr. Gro Brundtland, June 2003

The Open Society Institute established Public Health Watch in 2004 to support and promote independent civil society monitoring of government health policies vis-à-vis international health commitments such as the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the Amsterdam Declaration to Stop TB, and the UNGASS Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS.

Public Health Watch emphasizes both the publication of **high-quality reports** on government policies and a **participatory monitoring process**. On the assumption that informed public engagement is essential for effective policymaking, our approach highlights community-led research and ensures multiple opportunities for dialogue and exchange with a wide range of policy actors, including representatives of affected communities, civil society organizations, public health institutions, journalists, and government officials.

Public Health Watch monitoring aims to provide a sound basis for sustained civil society engagement in the development, implementation, and evaluation of health policies. Specifically, Public Health Watch has the following objectives:

- ▶ Mobilize broad-based civil society participation at the country level in **monitoring** the extent to which governments ensure their populations equal access to the highest possible standard of health care
- ▶ Publish **reports** identifying country-specific achievements and challenges on specific public health issues, recommending how challenges can be addressed and achievements scaled-up
- ▶ With the reports as a centerpiece, conduct targeted national and international **advocacy** campaigns to encourage greater compliance with global public health commitments

In keeping with the broader aims of the Open Society Institute’s Public Health Program, Public Health Watch’s initial reports will assess implementation of international commitments to control tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS—two closely linked diseases that lead to millions of preventable deaths annually.

TB MONITORING PROJECT

The **TB Monitoring Project** partners with civil society organizations in Bangladesh, Brazil, Nigeria, Tanzania, and Thailand (5 of the 22 WHO-designated “high burden countries”) to report on government efforts to meet their commitments under the Amsterdam Declaration to Stop Tuberculosis. OSI is a member of the Stop TB Partnership (www.stoptb.org).

HIV/AIDS MONITORING PROJECT

The **HIV/AIDS Monitoring Project** supports partner organizations in Nicaragua, Senegal, Ukraine, the United States, Vietnam, and Zambia to examine governmental compliance with the UNGASS Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and other international and regional HIV/AIDS commitments. Public Health Watch is collaborating with FUNDAR, the International Council of AIDS Service Organizations, Panos, the World AIDS Campaign, and other groups to press for greater civil society participation in UNGASS 2006 and other global HIV/AIDS control efforts.

“We cannot win the battle against AIDS if we do not also fight TB. . . . We have known how to cure TB for more than 50 years. . . . What we have lacked is the will and the resources to quickly diagnose people with TB and get them the treatment they need.”

—Nelson Mandela, at the 15th International AIDS conference in Bangkok, July 2004