

## **The overarching topic: “Health system strengthening: Health for all revisited”**

Since the Alma Ata Declaration forty years ago there has been a growing recognition that weak health systems threaten global health progress. The Declaration articulated primary health care as a set of guiding values for health development and the organization of health services, and proposed a range of approaches to address priority health needs and fundamental determinants to achieve health for all.

Meanwhile, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have exposed decades of failure to invest in fundamental health infrastructures and brought to the fore old debates of horizontal and vertical health interventions. Similarly, the rise of chronic diseases has revealed the burden of long-term care on weak health systems and budgets. More recently, the emphasis on sustainability in the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has further highlighted the importance of durable systems and capacities.

Today the global health community is preoccupied with health security and the International Health Regulations are back on the agenda. Nevertheless, it remains necessary to renew attention to neglected tropical diseases, to embrace the One Health agenda, to seek solutions to the issues of global health financing, and to continue the efforts to make full use of the advances of information and communication technologies.

This conference addresses these issues in nine symposia: Do the current global health issues rely on integrated and strong health systems for their success? To what extent can they contribute to the health system strengthening agenda?