

PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF HUMAN HEALTH IN AFRICA

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Summary

The problems facing the health sector today are increasingly complex, multidisciplinary in nature, often ill defined, and solutions to them uncertain. The health sector cannot address these problems on its own. New and innovative approaches are needed to integrate and operationalize concepts of environmental sustainability, economic development and community development, if human development is to be achieved. Wide-ranging reforms are also needed to more adequately deal with the protection and promotion of human health within a framework of sustainable development.

This chapter examines the factors that would help in the promotion and protection of human health. It heavily relies on published literature from the World Health Organization (WHO) and other sources. It is organized as follows: Section 1 presents comments on the health-and-environment linkage. Section 2 identifies some basic assumptions of health interventions with regard to their underlying concepts. Section 3 examines comments on settings in health promotion and protection. Section 4 draws on examples from Africa to illustrate steps being taken by governments and communities in terms of protecting and promoting human health on the continent. The last section, which serves as the conclusion makes policy proposals that would help improve the process of protecting and promoting human health.

1. Introduction

For various reasons many people today do not enjoy radiant health. There are many who survive the busy daily round in a spirit of noble endurance rather than one of zest and

lively interest. Some of these individuals are ill and often succumb to various maladies, and really do not enjoy the physical radiance which makes life meaningful.

Health and peace of mind are among life's greatest treasures. The fact is obvious that on every hand we find suffering and disease. People are afflicted with all kinds of ailments, among which cancer, diabetes, and diseases of the heart and blood vessels, rank high especially in the developed world. In the third world are manifestations of malaria, upper respiratory tract infection, diarrhoeal diseases, AIDS and pregnancy-related diseases. Without health, life is deprived not only of much, if not all, of its usefulness, but also of its joys and pleasures.

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Biographical Sketch

Kwame Ameyaw Domfeh, Ph.D. is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Public Administration, University of Ghana Business School, (formerly School of Administration) Legon, Ghana, where he has been teaching since 1993. His teaching and research interests include environmental policy and politics, environmental problems in the Third World, sustainable cities, and urban governance.

He was educated in both Ghana and the United States. He holds a Ph.D. in Public Administration. His Ph.D. thesis, 'Private Sector Participation in Solid Waste Management in Accra, Ghana', seeks to explain whether contracting out of public services in particular, and privatization in general, is a viable solution to the related problems of government inefficiency, ineffectiveness and growth.

His most recent publications include:

- "The Fourth Republican Constitution of Ghana and Sustainable Development," Legon Journal of International Affairs (LEJIA), Volume I, pp.120-144 (2004).
- "Managing the environment in a decade of administrative reforms in Ghana," International Journal of Public Sector Management, 17(7):606-620 (2004).
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His vision is to see the promotion and the translation of the key elements of sustainable development into a global reality.

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