

CHMM 2013

H.E. Mr Kamalesh Sharma, Secretary General of the Commonwealth, opened the meeting describing it as preparation for the World Health Assembly and pointing out that health is what the Commonwealth does best.

The Health Minister of Botswana, the Hon Rev Dr John Seakgossing, was then appointed Chair and he, in turn, appointed a volunteer group of representatives of the major regions to help him write the Report of the meeting for the next CHOGM. He emphasized the importance of the theme of the meeting, "Mental Health", for the post-2015 Agenda.

There followed 2 excellent presentations. The first, by Professor Chee NGO, Director, International Psychiatry Unit, University of Melbourne, was an overview of mental health, its challenges and opportunities. He included it among Non-Communicable Diseases and related it to the MDGs, economic health and poverty. He concluded by explaining interventions to improve mental health following the route .. Identify (best practices) > Plan (to initiate) > Scale up (programme management).

Following this, Ministers or their representatives of 9 countries discussed their own mental health problems, initiatives and research. Then, Antigua & Barbuda, Canada, Malta and Tonga's representatives presented their country case studies. Canada had been particularly proactive in promoting mental health and preventing problems, with some success but at great expense. A general discussion followed.

The second main presentation was by Sir George Alleyne, Director Emeritus, PAHO, on the health components of post-2015 sustainable development goals. This encompassed all health matters. He emphasized repeatedly the fundamental importance of health for human development. He also reiterated the major role of the Commonwealth in retaining health as a main sphere of action, in using the Commonwealth's tools of advocacy and partnerships to generate evidence, to optimise CHMMs, to sharpen technical and political outreach and above all, to champion "Maximising health at all stages of life" in the post- 2015 Development Agenda.

The discussion that followed focused on the need for universal health coverage and for more focus on nutrition especially in early life ... (**where CAPGAN can contribute**). Thereafter, the Chair of CACH, Mr Nick Tomlinson, presented his Report explaining that neither a work programme nor a theme for next year's CHMM could be offered until the new Strategic Plan is in place. CACH, he said, would convene after this to resolve these issues.

The last hour comprised 2 more presentations, one by Dr Astrid Bonfield, describing the work of the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust in tackling blindness, the other by Lord Kakkar, on "Commonwealth Connects", the Huddle based 'cloud' (*within which CAPGAN has its site*) its purposes and opportunities.

The final Chairman's Statement and AOCB were for Ministers or their representatives only.