

Preface

In our turbulent, interconnected and interdependent world, one person's security impacts another's, and one person's health or ill health can affect another's. Today's global economy binds the prosperity of countries together like never before, as seen in the sharp rise in food and energy prices worldwide, the decline of stock markets and the global financial crisis. These "crises of interdependence" have important public health implications. The damage is sometimes direct, as when climate change fosters the spread of communicable diseases or when rising food prices contribute to malnutrition. The damage can also be indirect, as these crises undermine the political and economic conditions necessary to promote and protect health equitably within and among societies. In a globalizing world, even local health decisions can have global impacts. At the same time, however, globalization also provides us with the opportunity to spread knowledge and resources across the world at a magnitude and with an efficacy that was impossible in the past.

Health has long been considered an issue of great "international" importance, but the recognition of health as a "global" concern is more recent. It is also profound and significant. This recognition not only requires us to think about health issues as global issues, but also alerts us to the necessity of making some health policy decisions at the global level. This is not the level at which health policy typically resides. Most health decisions have been made—and still should be made—at the local and national levels. The context of local realities has been and will remain paramount in health decision-making. To address the major health crises of today, however, and to prevent or mitigate them in the future, countries must seek collective agreement and action within *and across* their borders. As the number and frequency of decisions requiring global coordination and cooperation increase, we find ourselves in a new era of global health diplomacy.

In this new era, the most important and most commonly used tool for decision-making is negotiation. Because the international system operates on the assumptions of sovereign equality, cooperation and collaboration, rule-making, goal-setting and planning to address global health issues all require negotiation. In fact, we are currently experiencing a "new wave" of global health-related

negotiations. Some of these negotiations directly address health-related issues, such as infectious disease, while others address issues such as trade and environmental policy that may have indirect but profound impacts on health policy.

In our work with health policy-makers and practitioners around the world, it has become evident to us that health decision-makers are not fully prepared for the challenges of this new era of global health diplomacy nor as skilled in the tools required to participate effectively in it as they would like. Very often, the world of international negotiation is not the world in which health decision-makers reside or are most comfortable. We believe, however, that negotiation skills are now a critical part of any health policy-makers' toolbox. Such skills are essential for diplomats, ministers, foreign policy-makers and trade negotiators. They have become equally essential for health policy makers, health practitioners and program managers within donor, governmental and nongovernmental organizations. The goal of this guide is thus to provide these actors—with particular focus on health policy-makers in developing countries—with practical information and insight into the negotiation process, so that they may be able to work toward achieving better outcomes for public health.

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Negotiating Public Health in a Globalized World

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