



# DEBUT MEETING REPORT

P a k i s t a n   H e a l t h   P o l i c y   F o r u m   ( P H P F )

Forum Host  
*heartfile*



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This meeting report is a detailed account of the Debut Meet of Pakistan's Health Policy Forum. It captures the proceedings of the meeting; incorporates written comments from members and communiqués of Forum Members unable to participate in the Debut.

For a quick summary of the report please refer to the objectives of the Debut Meet (page 3) and inferences drawn from the commentaries of the participants (page 27).

An overview of Pakistan's Health Policy Forum is articulated in its Statement which is enclosed herewith as Appendix A.

# 1. Objectives of the Debut Meet

The 'Debut Meet' of Pakistan's Health Policy Forum was held in Islamabad on August 6, 2005 at Islamabad Club to achieve consensus on the 'Statement of the Forum' (Appendix A). The report covers the objectives, proceedings, communications to, and inferences drawn from the meeting.

The Debut Meet was organized:

- ? to facilitate sharing of stakeholder perspectives about the need for such an initiative and the perceived manner in which it can contribute to improving health outcomes within the country
- ? to introduce the rationale, scope, purpose and proposed action plan of the Forum as articulated in its 'Statement' amongst its members view to deliberating on these parameters so as to arrive at a consensus

Envisaged output of the meeting:

- ? To congregate impressions about the need for Pakistan's Health Policy Forum in order to justify its initiation
- ? Achieving a consensus on the Forum Statement and its action plan

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## 2. Proceedings of the Debut Meet

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### 2.1 Setting the context

*Dr. Sania Nishtar; Founder and Convener, Pakistan's Health Policy Forum*

Dr. Sania Nishtar thanked and welcomed the delegates and said she was heartened to see the impressive list of participants. Considering the objectives of the Debut Meet, she approached her introduction with an attempt to answering the following questions emphasizing that these questions formed the bedrock of the Forum's vision and mission.

- ✍ What is the context of the present initiative?
- ✍ Who are we?
- ✍ What do we want to achieve strategically?
- ✍ What will be the operational course of action?
- ✍ What are the risks and challenges involved?
- ✍ Purpose and deliverables of the meeting
- ✍ How will we go about conducting this meeting?

While setting the context, she outlined the following parameters about the Forum:

**The framework within which the Forum is to operate and the rationale for its membership:** health is not limited to people accessing care or the delivery of services; it is a very complicated interaction between individuals, organizations, institutions, providers, and people. People get sick due to a variety of reasons: inherent predisposition to diseases; acquired risks as a result of personal choices or exposure to risks in certain environmental and occupational settings. Since *preventive interventions can be targeted in these settings, it could be inferred that those who have a stake in environmental protection and labor have a stake in health as well.* It is well established that lack of attention to social determinants of health contributes significantly to morbidity and that promoting economic and social development leads to better health; therefore, *the development sector per se is a stakeholder in health.* Provision of preventive and curative services necessitate financing as well as inputs such as human resource, drugs, supplies and physical infrastructure. These need to be set within a legal, fiscal, and policy framework; within this framework, therefore, *healthcare financing organizations, those involved in capacity building and training, and those ultimately delivering care (whether in the private or the public sectors), are important stakeholders.* Administrative aspects necessitate the inclusion of the *establishment in general as an important stakeholder;* in addition, every aspect of healthcare has to be guided by evidence and thus the *importance of researchers and academia as indispensable stakeholders* cannot be denied.

**Membership of the Forum:** The Forum has broad-based representation from stakeholders, both from within and outside the health sector. The Forum will ensure greater participation in the future, specifically on behalf of practitioners of traditional medicine, pharmacists, paramedics, nurses, Lady Health Workers – groups that are currently not represented on the list of members. Existing members were requested to assist in identifying gaps in the member-base of the Forum in order to make it more inclusive.

**The objectives of the Forum:** the forum is both an independent health sector think-tank with an institutional mechanism as well as a platform for synchronizing stakeholder efforts. The purpose of the Forum is to assist in the development of, and monitor the development of health policies; foster their implementation and catalyze change through technical and policy support. The Forum will provide a point of national contact for stakeholders within the health sector, a forum for discussion and dialogue, an ongoing consultative mechanism, specific deliverables, a communication plan for deliverables and an accountability drive. The Health Policy Forum will perform analytical, advocacy, technical supportive roles and play a watchdog function.

The Forum is a catalyst in bringing about necessary changes in the healthcare sector. The Forum will be supportive of our Government's international commitments as in the case of meeting the MDGs and endorsing the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper framework, however, its will not come from endorsing these exclusively but from the ingenuity of its indigenous responses.

**Structure of the Forum:** members of the Forum will be called Forum Members; they will either represent organizations or be represented in their individual capacities. Membership will be sought by invitation into two categories – institutional and individual. Members would be expected to support the mission and the vision of Pakistan's Health Policy Forum and play a voluntary participatory role. Membership does not entail any legal or financial obligations or bind members to endorse respective viewpoints generated during discussions and dialogues. The Forum will have two types of 'democratic deliverables' namely: the Consensus Statement/s, and the View Points of the members.

A Core Group will oversee the strategic direction of the Forum. This group has been constituted from within the membership. The Host organization will implement the operational course of the Forum and commit its resources in order to provide technical and secretarial support.

Action plan of the Forum includes certain preliminary actions, which other than building the Forum membership involves developing the Gateway Paper as an index output of the Forum to set the tone and direction of the Forum and the setting of priorities; setting of priorities in order to comprehensively guide, the operational scope of work of the Forum and developing a Web-based discussion forum that will facilitate cost-effective and productive virtual dialogues amongst members.

Periodic initiatives include the setting up of an annual consultative moot for interfacing national policy makers with all other stakeholders in the health sector and other processes as may be necessary as an antecedent to this meet such as conducting relevant health policy and systems research and the development of policy positions. The Action Plan also articulates ongoing undertakings of the Forum; these include Development, articulation, and appropriate communication of specific policy position/s or relevant materials as Forum Consensus Statement/s and viewpoint/s in key priority area/s periodically or as needed and Responding to documents and consultations on health and allied social issues

## 2.2 Themed Commentaries (in alphabetical order)

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### Pakistan's Health Policy Forum within the context of development

*Mr. A. R. Kamal; Director, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE)*

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Mr. Kamal thanked the Host and the members for having invited him to comment on the Forum within the context of development. He argued that the role of the provider—government as well as Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)—needs to be streamlined. He concurred with Dr. Sania Nishtar that the Government has priorities within the context of PRSP and MDGs, which determine spending in the health sector. He sincerely hoped that the Forum can devise and facilitate the implementation of National Health Policy in keeping with the Governments' alignment with MDGs and yet achieve those targets through indigenous mechanisms.

He stressed that the Forum should keep in mind the scarcity of resources while deliberating upon the financing—role of the State or private—mechanism for the delivery of healthcare. He argued that during 1990s the Government suddenly increased the amount allocated to the health sector but the funding weaned off under the pretext that it was unable to deliver the desired services. He disagreed with the given argument and suggested that the health sector in Pakistan requires a major infusion of resources from the Government.

In his concluding remarks, Dr. Kamal invited the Forum to devise systems for financing of healthcare for the indigent population.

#### **Inference**

The Forum can play an effective role in developing new models of financing and advocating for greater investments in the health sector

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### Pakistan's Health Policy Forum from a media perspective

*Mr. Agha Nasir; Senior Journalist*

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Mr. Agha Nasir talked about the long struggle for the emancipation of media. He highlighted the significance of media and its newly won freedom in covering issues pertinent to health and the civil society. He thanked the Secretary Health, Mr. Anwar Mehmood in facilitating the engagement of media in healthcare issues. He said that the media is now free to raise issues but what remains unclear is the role that media should play in building the health of the people of Pakistan.

Talking about the development of a formal system of reporting to increasing health awareness, Mr. Agha Nasir requested the Forum to provide guidelines for action to media personnel – this he said would be one of the functions of the Forum as envisaged by him. He argued that various media have their own limitations and professionals in the industry need directions to keep from misinforming people. He

said that for media to play a positive role in promoting health, journalists need to be trained in medical language, events, and issues.

**Inference**

The Forum can act as a key resource for the media where journalists can have first-hand exposure to issues relating to the health sector

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**Pakistan's Health Policy Forum—the Public-Private interface**

*Dr. Ashfaq Ahmed; Deputy Director General, International Health, Ministry of Health*

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Dr. Ashfaq Ahmed thanked the Host and the members of the Forum and said he was very pleased to share his views on Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) as mode of action for the Forum in achieving its objectives.

He said that despite the increasing health budget, private out-of-pocket spending accounted for more than two-thirds of total health expenditure in Pakistan. He was of the view that being the biggest spender and an important stakeholder, the private sector needed representation in the policy-making process. While discussing health promotion and its role in altering public behavior, he warned that until public opinion is incorporated in policy making, such initiatives will remain futile. "We have several experiences of successful public-private interface relationships in the health sector – we have had a positive relationship with the Host of the Forum – Heartfile – and feel that there is a need to build further on such experiences. We see many private sector partners here and it is heartening to see the support for the Forum", he said.

He said that the Forum will provide a concerted interface of the public- with the private-sector as both the sectors had much to offer to each other, and hoped that the Forum will capitalize on the strength of this relationship. He requested the members to foster a culture of dialogue and debate, which he referred to as key to addressing health systems challenges. He said that he was keen in his personal capacity to see the forum flourish and gain strength and felt very happy in being a part of it.

**Inference**

The Forum is an excellent platform for achieving synergies in delivery of healthcare through PPP initiatives

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**The importance of Pakistan's Health Policy Forum from the perspective of enhancing the role of private sector in service delivery**

*Dr. Faisal Sultan, CEO, Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital*

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Dr. Faisal Sultan said he felt pompous to speak on behalf of the private sector but lauded the efforts of the Host in putting together the Forum.

He viewed quality improvement as the key to improving service delivery and asked the members to devise locally viable quality improvement systems—a task which he understood to be the most rewarding. Talking about private delivery mechanisms in Pakistan, he said that the private sector is like an “unguided missile” and lacks any regulatory framework or structure. He was hopeful that the Forum could work in the area of health systems development, standard treatment guidelines, and certification in order to address the problems of substandard quality in healthcare delivery.

Talking about development expenditures, he stressed the need for reform in the existing delivery apparatus. He identified planning as an important area for the Forum to work on. He maintained that the private sector had done a great deal in improving the health of the Nation and the Forum could advocate on behalf of the private-sector health industry on issues that are important for delivering good care. He stressed the need for evidence generation and called on the public-, and private-sector academia to generate the evidence on gaps in the system.

#### **Inference**

Forum can introduce a culture of quality amongst private sector providers and can advocate on behalf of the private sector health care providers

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### Pakistan's Health Policy Forum from the perspective of private medical academia

*Prof. Dr. Fareed uddin Baqai, Chancellor, Baqai University*

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Dr. Baqai thanked the Host for having invited him on behalf of the private medical academia. He lamented the fact that the private sector [academia] had been assigned no role in policy making and yet it had developed by leaps and bounds in the absence of any guidance from the public sector. He expressed great hope that the Forum will adopt “this baby” [private sector academia] and will take up issues on its behalf.

Concerned over the share of private sector academia in building public-private partnerships, he said he had no idea about the configuration of such partnerships and the stakes involved—“if it is a 50/50 partnership or otherwise?” he commented.

He said that it was about time that the private sector academia identified issues and mechanisms to address them. He demanded an in-depth situation analysis be carried out to gauge where we stand, where we have to go, and how long will it take to reach there. He hoped that the Forum will concentrate on issues of manpower and capacity building in the private sector and determine the extent of demand for medical education, post graduate students, paramedics, ancillary staff. He lauded this initiative and assured the Host of his support.

**Inference**

The Forum is an institutional mechanism the private-sector academia looks up to as a way of ensuring that their rights are protected

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**Pakistan's Health Policy Forum and mainstreaming the role of civil society in health policy**

*Dr. Ghaffar Billo, HANDS*

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Dr. Billo hoped the Forum will not turn out to be a one time effort. Concerned over the lack of primary care, he stated that over 50% of people in rural areas had no access to quality primary health care. He argued that public sector utilization of services stood at a mere 20-30%, which demands attention and requested the Forum to set some targets for improving access and devise mechanisms that will mandate the provision of services to the masses instead of waiting for people to come and seek care.

Elaborating the role Civil Society Organizations, he was of the view that despite the limited experiences, CSOs had gathered a vast body of evidence on healthcare needs and had taken evidence-based action to meet those needs within the limited resources. He brought to the Forum's attention the training sessions organized by HANDS which led to a substantial fall in infant mortality after just three years of intervention.

Being concerned over the state of human resources in the health sector, he argued that the potential of people had not been harnessed. He said that CSOs have an important role in filling the gaps in healthcare delivery. Talking about manpower, he expressed concerns over the lack of interest on part of the medical graduates to work in rural areas and stressed on the need to train more paramedics to alleviate the problem of access. With 4 million babies being delivered each year, Pakistan has only two schools for training mid-wives, he added.

He further requested the government to increase spending on health to at least 6 percent. Shedding light on the role of traditional medicine specialists in rural areas, he hoped that this very important segment will be represented in the Forum.

**Inference**

The Forum can facilitate a concerted effort on part of the Civil Society Organizations and other stakeholders towards improving health of the impoverished population

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**Pakistan's Health Policy Forum—the science and Policy interface**

*Dr. Gregory Papas, Chair, Community Health Sciences, Aga Khan University*

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Dr. Papas thanked the host for initiating the "right project at the right time" and added that he had participated in a similar project called "Health Champions" in Africa.

He emphasized the role of academic sector in generating the knowledge base and the subsequent translation of health sciences into useful information for policy makers and stressed the need for shortening the lag that exists between information in medical journals and how it becomes a meaningful resource for guiding policy inputs.

He suggested that the academic sector should not only gather the evidence-base but they must evaluate the outcomes of interventions from a national and regional perspective. Stressing the need for operational research in healthcare delivery as a way of identifying cost-effective and quality interventions, he suggested that the Forum should take steps to strengthen such research.

Associating the lack of cleanliness in hospitals with management failure, he argued that Muslims are taught to stay clean but the sheer fact that healthcare facilities are otherwise substantiates his argument.

He requested the participants to study the process of policy-making and analyze how policy really works especially from the perspective of equity. He strongly lauded the initiative.

#### **Inference**

The Forum provides the right blend of stakeholders who will ensure that the right project is undertaken at the right time and will facilitate smooth and meaningful translation of science into policy

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### The importance of Pakistan's Health Policy Forum from a reform-related perspective

*Inam ul Haq, World Bank*

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Dr. Inam ul Haq thanked the Host and urged the participants to explore and study options for reforms in Pakistan and hoped that the Forum will provide a platform for discussing such options and also provide policy support to the provincial and federal governments.

He said that the major challenge faced by the healthcare industry was lack of proper management. Various organizations have suggested reforms in the past and more often than not these are discussed with the Ministry of Health but he said he would like more discussion taking place between various stakeholders.

Praising the Forum, he said that the Forum provides an opportunity to have discussion on what are the reforms; whether they will work in Pakistan; the implementation plan for such reforms and other relevant issues. He said that there ought to be a larger debate with various stakeholders—from hospital- to pharmaceutical- industry—on what these reforms actually mean.

He asked the participants to reach consensus on issues and generate evidence based reforms since it was critical to the success of the Forum. He further added

that the Forum should provide support to Dr. Mushtaq Ahmed of the National Health Policy Unit and other departments of the Government.

#### **Inference**

The Forum is the right place for generating a dialogue on health reforms currently being proposed within the country with regard to their appropriateness and acceptability

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### The importance of Pakistan's Health Policy Forum from a rights and equity perspective

*Ms. Kausar Khan, Social Sector Expert, Aga Khan University*

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Ms. Kausar Khan thanked the Host and the participants. She elaborated on the recent global emphasis on equity in health: the WHO Commission on Social Determinants has equity on its agenda, the UN maintains a Repertoire for Health as a Human Right and earlier the same was articulated by the PHC Declaration of 1978. She said that averages hide inequities and that there is a great need to understand and improve upon the social determinants of health if health outcomes are to be improved, which, she maintained, can only be improved through the strengthening of health systems.

Shedding light on the situation in Pakistan, she said that owing to the weak health systems, health indicators have remained poor. She was of the view that the health sector had been unable to provide leadership in putting health concerns on the agenda of other ministries (education, public health, law, food, transport, and communication). She further maintained that the State is not fulfilling its responsibility in the case of health and its social determinants.

Concerned over the absence of equity-related issues in healthcare research, she said that health policies or human rights groups have remained silent on inequities in the provision of healthcare. She further argued that policy makers do not focus on health as a right and healthcare providers do not talk about this "right" as an integral part of the delivery process. Stressing the role of communities in health policy making, she argued that when the State is unable or unwilling to provide an acceptable standard of care for the masses, the role of communities becomes all the more important.

Stating the importance of the Forum she lauded the efforts of the Host in bringing together various stakeholders and for providing them with a space to address the question of equity with special reference to the vulnerable population. She hoped that the Forum will provide the members with an opportunity to deliberate on how rights could be mainstreamed in health systems. She expressed great confidence in the intellectual apparatus of the Forum and added that it [the Forum] had a fairly clear vision and requested the members to focus on its goals.

**Inference**

The Forum with its diverse and rich intellectual apparatus can analyze and address the question of equity in healthcare

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**Pakistan's Health Policy Forum—the global health perspective**

*Dr. Khalif Bile Mohamud, Resident Representative, WHO Pakistan Office*

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Dr. Bile highlighted the importance of public health and its complimentary nature in determining global health. He said that public health interventions had positively affected health of people in Pakistan and that outcomes measurement on a global scale provided comparative advantage of perspective on over all health of people. He shed light on the epidemiological-, and demographic-transitions that have taken place over the years but warned that a country could lose its elevated status and become worse off if health is ignored.

WHO seeks mortality data from countries and the figures reveal that 57 million die each year; over all 32% of deaths happen due to communicable diseases. He said that policy discussion in different countries varied according to morbidity data and in Pakistan, the real impediment to health of people is the wide prevalence of communicable disease. He stressed the need for global policy and strategy formation that is based on a careful analysis of essential interventions which have a bearing on the morbidity and mortality. He urged the Forum members to prioritize issues whether they are urban, rural, structural, or issues of quality, access, equity, or demand.

Dr. Bile asked the participants to have a clear understanding of what is it that they want to achieve at the outset. He further requested them to be complimentary in their role at the Forum so that the national policy could thrive. The unity of purpose should be the priority of all members, he added.

**Inference**

The Forum should be based on an explicit mission of facilitating the development of National Health Policy

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**The importance of Pakistan's Health Policy Forum from a consumer's perspective**

*Ayyaz Kiani, Advocacy Head, The Network for Consumer Protection*

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Explaining the concerns of the healthcare consumer, Mr. Ayyaz Kiani said that major factors, which determine the satisfaction of consumers are access, quality of care, and redress. He assured the participants that the Network was struggling with these issues in order to provide greater access and quality to the end-user. He listed different initiatives of the Network for Consumer Protection and added that with such diverse background his organization welcomes the Forum that has been set up to facilitate a multi-stakeholders discourse on health policy.

Talking about the challenges, he said that the Forum ought to be open, inclusive, and should provide the members the opportunity to talk about everything pertinent to the health of the people. He further said that the Forum should have an open agenda and a system should be devised to get inputs from 'mo-hal-lahs' (neighborhoods) and streets and that the Network's position on the Forum was supportive and clear with the expectation that the Forum will be transparent and independent of all preconceived notions.

**Inference**

The Forum should be open and inclusive as to provide the members with a chance to raise all sorts of issues

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**Pakistan's Health Policy Forum—linkages with the Health Policy Unit**

*Dr. Mushtaq Khan, Chief, Health Policy Unit*

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Dr. Mushtaq thanked the Host and concurred with her vision and mission for the Forum. He said that health policy will certainly address the issues of inequity, morbidity, and mortality and the government had a vision in the form of MDGs and PRSP, and an action plan in the form of MTDGs but he urged the members to come up with an action plan to achieve the targets.

He advised the members to focus on health goals rather than going into the history to explore our failures. He asserted that the public sector had never claimed that it will achieve the goals solely and the challenge was universal and not just limited to the public sector. Lauding the efforts of the Host, Dr. Mushtaq said that the Forum offers and excellent opportunity for synergizing, accommodating, and listening to key stakeholders.

Shedding light on the economic issues in the health sector, Dr. Mushtaq said he had analyzed two main issues: (1) low fund availability for the health sector and, (2) within the health sector there is less than optimal allocation of funds to priorities where one sub-sector is compromised at the cost of another. He maintained that while calculating the private vs. public spending, consultancy fee for public hospital physicians is never accounted for. He argued that the private sector has always been given incentives and medical colleges had not come up any suggestions for reform. He reiterated his support to the Forum and said that we all have one road to achieve common goals.

**Inference**

The Forum and the National Health Policy Unit can capitalize on each other's strength for achieving common goals

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**The importance of Pakistan's Health Policy Forum from the perspective of meeting programmatic targets such as the MDGs**

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*Paul Rukert, GTZ*

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Paul Rukert congratulated the Host on putting the Forum together. With reference to his commentary, he said it was not necessary to talk about international goals. While recollecting his first visit to Pakistan, he said that ten years back his first question to the N.W.F.P. health authorities was whether there existed a health policy? And the answer was "No", he added. He said that he was heartened to see that after ten years provincial, and Federal Health Policy Unit/s have been set up.

He lauded the launching the Forum and reiterated his full support for the initiative.

**Inference**

The Forum is an important milestone towards charting an effective health policy

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**Pakistan's Health Policy Forum and chronic disease control**

*Prof. Dr. Samad Sehra, Diabetic Association of Pakistan*

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Prof. Shera said he has always believed that the success of any healthcare program depended on the involvement of seven "P's", which he enumerated as (1) policy makers; (2) physicians; (3) people; (4) public; (5) private sector; (6) pharmaceutical industry; (7) press and electronic media. He complimented the Host and said he opted to be a member because he concurred with the philosophy under which the Forum was created. "She is wiser than her years", he added.

Referring to the 18 billion rupee health budget, he showed great concern over setting up of a four-hundred-bed hospital for tuberculosis. He said that two of the biggest diabetes care facilities in the world have approximately 30-beds each; every curative center is a reflection of the failure of preventive services, which need to be at the heart of public sector priorities within the health sector.

**Inference**

Forum can optimize public sector spending on health

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**The importance of Pakistan's Health Policy Forum from a public policy perspective**

*Dr. Talib Lashari, Peoples Health Movement, Pakistan*

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Referring to a UN report that identifies flaws in the health system in Pakistan, Dr. Lashari said that the health system is fragmented and has not attained maturity as

yet. He argued that if all available health policy documents in Pakistan are reviewed, they lack system's perspective and health system clearly has a long way to go before it can achieve prescribed goals. He said that the cost of common illnesses is pushing people into further poverty and if things are looked at from a macro perspective, policy documents lack a holistic approach. Talking about the People's Health Movement in Pakistan, he said that its establishment has contributed significantly to the cause of public health and informed the audience about the launch of PHM Report.

He welcomed the Forum and referred to it as having significant importance. He was of the view that the Forum should also deliberate on the demand side of policy and the public sector should work on supply side agenda. He hoped that Civil Society Organizations and the public sector can capitalize on each others strengths.

Concluding his commentary, he hoped that the Forum will organize and put in place experts from all sectors and will play a major role in policy development.

#### **Inference**

The Forum can play a key role in effective policy development

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### **Pakistan's Health Policy Forum from a health systems perspective**

**Sameen Siddiqui**, Regional Advisor: Health Policy and Planning; WHO EMRO

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Dr. Sameen Siddique talked about health policy from a health systems perspective. He shed light on three different angles from which health policy could be approached, namely: the process-, content-, and the programmatic perspectives. He argued that Pakistan was doing reasonably well on programmatic policy (TB, Malaria Control, and EPI programs).

Talking about health systems, he emphasized the need for strengthening health systems through capacity building. He said that policy makers need to understand what health systems are and how they are organized. He requested the members to deliberate on Pakistan's policy on financing of healthcare; private sector governance; human resource in the health sector; technology, decentralization, devolution, and international trade within the WTO perspective.

He said that programs and policy are two sides of the same coin. Referring to the policy process as being political and not merely a technical one, he urged the members to bring evidence into decision making. He concluded by saying that policy making is about lives and not limited to mere rules and procedures.

#### **Inference**

The Forum brings together stakeholders from all perspective of policy making and it should capitalize on this intellectual strength towards ensuring evidence based decision making in health policy formulation

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**Pakistan's Health Policy Forum and the State**

*Mr. Anwar Mehmood, Federal Secretary Health, Ministry of Health*

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Mr. Secretary thanked Dr. Sania for inviting him to the Forum and said that he felt privileged to be a part of this initiative.

Referring to Dr. Siddiqui's and Dr. Shera's remarks on the construction of a 300-bed hospital in Rawalpindi, he clarified that the facility was being built for the women of the city and the foundation stone had been laid by the Prime Minister. 'The hospital is not a treatment center for Tuberculosis and the misunderstanding had arisen from the fact that the land on which the hospital is being constructed belongs to the TB hospital', he added.

The Secretary again complimented Dr. Sania for taking this important initiative and said he was heartened to speak on behalf of the State. He said people generally tend to confuse the State with the government whereas these are two distinct entities.

Mr. Secretary reiterated support for the Forum on behalf of the Ministry and in his individual capacity. He said that the government is willing to walk the distance to the extent that the Forum wants it to walk. The Secretary assured the Forum of full support from the Federal Minister and said that the Minister also believed that this collaborative effort must be carried forward.

Shedding light on the role of public-private partnerships in improving the health of the nation, he urged the members to utilize the potential of all sectors for the betterment of people and the State. Mr. Secretary said that the success of the Forum depends on its autonomy, "the more independent, the stronger it will be," he added. He linked the success of the national health policy with the success of the Forum and suggested that the National Health Policy Unit should work closely with the Forum.

He hoped that parliamentarians will be on board soon as they have the mandate for making final decisions. He urged the members not to be combative and join hands. In his concluding remarks, Mr. Secretary requested all members to join hands for a cause that is dear to all. He further requested the Forum to work in a mutually cooperative and supportive manner.

**Inference**

The Government is supportive of and endorses the independence of the Forum

### 1.3 Open floor Comments

The floor was now meant to be opened for a dialogue, however, in view of the time constraints only one comment was invited. The Host assured that each member's views would go into the meeting report.

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**Prof. Nasir uddin Azam,**  
*Professor of Medicine*

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Prof. Nasir urged the members to keep in mind that health is a small aspect of overall well being of people; 'people themselves rate health as being a number-7 priority while food as a priority stands on top of the list' he said. 'Any effort towards improving the health of the poor ought to be integrated and members should bear people's priorities in mind while deliberating on health policy'.

Talking about the composition of the forum, he said that since health policy is made by the Ministry of Health and their staff does not stay in the Ministry for more than three years, there is a need to involve other people to have a sustained policy. He recommended that parliamentarians be included in the forum since they have the mandate. Another suggestion that he made was to include independent professionals in the forum who have no other commitments and can spare more time for Forum's activities.

He said that our country has suffered from a lack of concepts and added that any planning effort must start with concepts. He urged the participants to deliberate on visionary concepts before jumping to the policy process.

#### **Inference**

The Forum has the potential to ensure and maintain a conceptual policy making approach towards achieving health-related goals

## 1.4 Vote of thanks

Concluding the Debut Meet, Dr. Sania Nishtar thanked the Federal Secretary for his kind remarks and said, "your encouragement and blessing will be critical to the success of the Forum".

She expressed sincere apologies to colleagues who could not comment on the Forum but added that the meeting report would incorporate written comments of those who were unable to speak in addition to the communiqués of colleagues who were unable to come to the Debut Meet but are supporters of the Forum.

She thanked all participants for their time and efforts in bringing the Forum together and expressed great appreciation for Mr. Paul Rukert and GTZ for supporting the meeting.

## 2. Written communiqués of Forum members

[participants who were unable to make a contribution due to shortage of time]

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**Prof. Malik H. Mubbashar**, Vice Chancellor, University of Health Sciences, Lahore

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It was my pleasure to be a participant of the Debut Meet of Pakistan Health Policy Forum and I take this opportunity to reiterate my support for your,<sup>1</sup> sincere efforts in improving, protecting, and promoting the health and well-being of the country's population through the establishment of a voluntary and neutral Forum.

I will always be ready to provide my support and guidance for the noble cause of improving health in Pakistan. Best and sincere wishes for the future of the Forum with promise to support and to share my knowledge and experiences with you.

### **Inference**

The Forum can help protect and improve the health of the country's population

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**Mr. Anees Jillani**, Advocate, Supreme Court of Pakistan

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I feel that the legislative framework relating to health issues is weak and major changes could be brought about by introducing proper, appropriate, and progressive laws in this regard.

Additionally, no miracle can be expected unless a change in behavior at the individual, communal, and governmental level is brought about. The Forum should concentrate in this arena and try to influence a positive behavioral change through concrete action, and should also gear governmental actions in this respect.

Healthcare delivery in Pakistan is a provincial matter, and every attempt should be made to strengthen the lower tiers rather than simply operating at the Federal level. There is no doubt that the system presently operating at the provincial and the local government level is weak but it may actually be so because it was never given an opportunity to flourish. I strongly believe that while others have ignored this aspect, the Forum will address it.

### **Inference**

The Forum can develop and suggest legislative and governance models for regulating health sector

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<sup>1</sup> Addressed to Sania Nishtar

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**Dr. Tasleem Akhtar**, Public Health Specialist

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I would like to take this opportunity to thank you [the Host] for the invitation to the Debut Meet and also for inviting my comments. I greatly appreciate this initiative and assure you of my full support in your endeavor to bring some rationality to health policy making in Pakistan.

The role of a good policy in guiding the development of health care delivery systems is yet to be understood and accepted in Pakistan. Health-policy making in our country is as yet an office-based academic exercise which is undertaken for political reasons. The current health policy is not evidence-based; it is narrowly focused and fails to identify and address many critical issues. It fails to address important aspects like human resource development, issues of coverage, accessibility and utilization of services, and creating awareness among all stakeholders regarding existing and emerging threats to the health of people in Pakistan.

The weakness of the current policy-making process is mainly due to the lack of effective stakeholder participation in the process. To date it has been mainly a few officials of the Ministry of Health and Planning Commission with some sort of guidance from donors, who have been developing policy documents.

The Forum offers the opportunity for a wider discussion on policy issues and gives voice to an array of stakeholders. This and other platforms are sorely needed in the country to rationalize the policy-making process.

The success of the Forum will depend on the knowledge and understanding of its members—regarding health issues faced by the country—and their sincerity and commitment in working with others to address these issues. Therefore, a mechanism for the recruitment of members is of critical importance. Of equal importance is the development of strategies to give a clout to the Forum so that its voice is heard. For the former, the most effective means would be the Internet. Therefore, establishing a Forum's website is an immediate requirement. Other strategies need to be identified and developed to achieve the objectives of the Forum.

**Inference**

The Forum—by virtue of its intellectual capital and its carefully planned mode of action—can bring sophistication and rationality to decision making in health regulation.

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**Dr. Zaheer Ahmed**, Executive Director, Shifa International Hospital

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I have gone through the Forum's mission, vision, purpose, structure, and the membership process and found it an interesting proposition for the diagnosing and generating solutions for the betterment and sustainability of health policy issues. No doubt the deteriorating health conditions in our country necessitate a forum of such kind which has been overdue since long. Your initiative and pursuance to

develop such a forum is highly commendable. I congratulate you and your team for conceiving such a noble idea and for working to establish it on solid footings.

It will be my privilege to be a part of this Forum on behalf of Shifa International Hospitals Limited. Surely it will help all of us to contribute as much as we can for the betterment and improvement of healthcare at all levels in our country.

**Inference**

The Forum facilitates a noble cause

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**Dr. Aldo Landi**, Country Coordinator, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)

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I believe that the Forum should look at:

- 1) Assessment of the existing health system and propose accountability framework for the staff working in the public sector and a cost monitoring system to be put in place.
- 2) The linkage between the public sector reform process and his impact on health system, especially related to incentives, career development, merits schemes etc.
- 3) Policy forum should also discuss governance, public/private partnership and corruption implications.
- 4) Health programmes where multi-sectoral approaches are a must and responsibilities of the State vis-à-vis of the population, especially the protection of the least privileged groups.
- 5) Legal and Human Rights aspects, international commitments of Pakistan, follow up plans and responsibilities.

These are some issues that could be put into the meetings agenda in order to use the forum as problem solving instrument and not only as intellectual exchange of experiences.

**Inference**

The Forum can bring rationality into the existent delivery of healthcare by proposing alternate models that are more effective and efficient

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**Prof. Dr. Fareed Aslam Minhas**, Professor of Psychiatry

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Pakistan's Health Policy Forum will help shape the future of healthcare delivery in the country. The Forum has the precious input of multidisciplinary health professionals and stakeholders with a vision to provide 'health for all'.

The Forum's current leadership and its think tank capacity will certainly develop health policies which will be a milestone for health provision in other developing countries.

**Inference**

The Forum has the intellectual capacity for developing and shaping policies that will help shape the future of healthcare delivery in Pakistan

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**Dr. Muhammad Arshad Rana**, President, PMA (Rawalpindi/Islamabad Chapter)

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Pakistan Medical Association has been stressing on the need for a results-oriented, pro-poor health policy since its inception. The Association developed an indigenous policy document – the Peoples Health Scheme of 1972 – and submitted it to the Government which, to the dismay of our members, gathers dust on shelves.

PMA endorses and supports the aims and objectives of the Forum. I strongly believe that there is a great need to change the attitudes of the providers [deliverers] of healthcare, be they physicians, nurses, or the paramedics and only then a pro-poor policy will prosper.

**Inference**

The Forum can play a role in catalyzing the development of a pro-poor health policy

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**Mr. Jurgen König, check spelling** Chairman, Pharma Bureau

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My personal expectations of the Forum are extremely high. I wish to see not only policies, but also models of implementation prepared and officially proposed by the Forum.

Mutual respect, consensus of the stakeholders, and an inclusive approach will be key to meeting these objectives. I would also like to see the base of this Forum being broadened to include professional associations and parliamentarians.

The Forum must also devise a guide or a priority list of Corporate Social Responsibility Projects for the pharmaceutical industry.

**Inference**

The Forum should take up the issue of Corporate Social Responsibility and come up with viable and mutually agreeable means to address it

### 3. Written communiqués of Forum members [who were unable to attend the meeting]

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**Dr. Abdul Ghaffar, Global Forum for Health Research**

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The problems of Pakistan's health system are well known, as are the technologies needed to deal with them. Now, the crucial issue is how to choose the most appropriate means to address these problems. This effort demands informed policy making, and the proposed Health Policy Forum, which would involve *all* stakeholders, is a first step in the right direction.

**Inference**

The Forum is the first step towards informed policy-making

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**Prof. Azhar Faruqi, Professor of Cardiology**

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Thank you for your kind invitation to join Pakistan's Health Policy Forum. I have tried to understand the objectives and the potential of impact such a Forum may have on Pakistan's Health Policy.

I must admit though, that I have a few reservations. I appreciate the list of participants/members and I think these are eminent people who have much to contribute on the subject. However, I am still not clear on how we can effect changes that previous such efforts have failed to achieve.

I believe that the Forum, during its Debut Meeting, must primarily and without reservations address the issue of whether such a Forum is: (a) necessary and (b) if yes, then how its efforts can be assured a reasonable chance of achieving its objectives. The efforts of such a gathering must not be a repetition of various failed Health Policy documents produced in the past. The stumbling block, in the final analysis is always the absence of political will to enforce the recommendations in the face of societal and vested interest opposition.

We all know what the problems are; what is needed is a plan that will be acceptable and will succeed in our peculiar environment. In the final analysis it all boils down to politics and not science. Despite my reservations, if the imminent members think we should go ahead with the Forum, then you can count me in despite my reservations.

**Inference**

The Forum should mobilize political will and should come up with an action plan that is viable and not a futile repetition of similar undertakings in the past

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**Mr. Ejaz Rahim, Cabinet Secretary**

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I am responding to the call of the Forum in my individual capacity because I believe the membership of the Forum can do justice to the cause they have chosen to espouse.

The design of the Forum has been skillfully put together. The idea is to critically appraise the health of the Health Sector; to join hands in an endeavor to play a useful role in health and health-relevant matters that effect people; and to be able to reach out. In the end, a lot will depend on the Forum's ability to be relevant. I wish the Forum Godspeed through Dr. Sania Nishtar.

**Inference**

The Forum should stay focused and retain its relevance

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**Mr. Saeed Allawala, PPMA**

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It is indeed very encouraging to see someone pulling up the key people from all walks of life and bringing them under one umbrella of Pakistan Health Policy Forum. As health is much more than just the absence of disease, we must look at its definition in the broader perspective. I believe that this Forum is intended to be a vehicle for the exploration and discussion of health policy issues and is aimed in particular at enhancing communication between health policy researchers, legislators, decision-makers, and professionals concerned with developing, implementing and analyzing health policy. But in doing so, I hope, the independent character of the Forum will never be compromised!

Last but not the least; the Forum should also encourage the submission of original, empirically-based, comparative and/or global studies. To achieve this, the Forum should have its own publication where the authors are encouraged to write in a non-technical style, which is understandable to health policy practitioners, specialists from other disciplines and people at large so that the message may broadcast far and wide.

**Inference**

The Forum will facilitate dialogues between policy makers, researchers, legislators, decision-makers, and providers of healthcare

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**Dr. Yasmin Qazi, Packard Foundation**

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Congratulations on starting the Health Policy Forum, as I understand from the communications, this forum will be providing an opportunity for discussing and analyzing various aspects of Health Policy as it impacts the population.

My interest would be to see all experts engage in it to analyze policies with respect to equity, social justice, rights and access. I hope that Reproductive Health remains a central issue along-with MDGs in all discussions.

I wish the Host and the Forum all the best in its endeavors.

**Inference**

The Forum should frame and analyze policies from an equity and rights perspective

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**Dr. Zafar Mirza, Regional Advisor, WHO EMRO**

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Keeping in view the technical excellence of the individuals and resourcefulness of the organizations they represent in this historic meeting and reminding ourselves of the abysmal on-ground situation of delivery and quality of health care services for the voiceless millions of poor citizens in Pakistan – I ask you a question: do we have any choice at all for not working together?

It is a very important meeting for me. I wish I could be there, among all of you, in this galaxy of stars who have gathered for a common cause and common good. It is initiatives and gatherings like these which reflect our collective conscience and which change the course of things.

This initiative is all about creating symbiosis and exercising responsible and active citizenship and I feel proud to be part of this effort. Since I know Dr. Sania Nishtar and her seriousness and sincerity hence I know that this initiative is going to succeed. She has provided an important start but ultimately it depends on all of us that how much we are prepared to contribute in this collective action. I hope, and wish and pray for the effectiveness of this initiative.

**Inference**

Decision makers in the health sector have no choice but to support the Forum in its unbiased efforts towards improving the health of voiceless millions

## 4. Inference and steps ahead

The following inferences can be drawn from the aforementioned commentaries and written communiqués of members. These have been divided into three categories based on member's perceptions on what the Forum is and what it can do and their views on what the Forum should do.

### Member's perceptions on **what the Forum is:**

- ? an independent organization endorsed by the Government—*Mr. Anwar Mehmood*
- ? an excellent platform for achieving synergies in delivery of healthcare through PPP initiatives—*Dr. Ashfaq Ahmed*
- ? an important milestone towards charting an effective health policy—*Dr. Paul Rukert*
- ? an appropriate place for generating a dialogue on current health reforms—*Dr. Inam ul Haq*
- ? an institutional mechanism to which the private-sector academia boks up to as a way of ensuring that their rights are protected—*Dr. Fareed uddin Baqai*
- ? a right blend of stakeholders who will facilitate smooth and meaningful translation of science into policy—*Dr. Gregory Papas*
- ? indispensable as a mechanism for protecting the rights of voiceless millions—*Dr. Zafar Mirza*
- ? being set up to facilitate a noble cause—*Dr. Zaheer Ahmed*

### Member's perceptions on **what the Forum can do:**

- ? facilitate dialogues between policy makers, researchers, legislators, decision-makers, and providers of healthcare—*Mr. Saeed Allawala*
- ? develop policies that will help shape the future of healthcare delivery in Pakistan—*Prof. Dr. Fareed Aslam Minhas*
- ? help protect and improve the health of the country's population—*Prof. Dr. Malik Mubashir*
- ? play an effective role in developing new models of financing and advocating for greater investments in the health sector—*Mr. A. R. Kamal*
- ? bring rationality into the existent delivery of healthcare by proposing alternate models that are more effective and efficient—*Dr. Aldo Landi*
- ? play a role in catalyzing the development of a pro-poor health policy—*Dr. Muhammad Rana*
- ? develop and suggest legislative and governance models for regulating health sector—*Mr. Anees Jillani*
- ? help ensure and maintain a conceptual policy making approach towards achieving health-related goals—*Prof. Nasir uddin Azam*
- ? play a key role in effective policy development—*Dr. Talib Lashari*
- ? rationalize public sector spending on health—*Dr. Samad Shera*
- ? synergize the efforts of National Health Policy Unit for achieving common goals—*Dr. Mushtaq Khan*
- ? analyze and address—with its diverse and rich intellectual apparatus—the question of equity in healthcare—*Ms. Kausar Khan*
- ? facilitate a concerted effort on part of the Civil Society Organizations and other stakeholders towards improving health of the impoverished population—*Dr. Ghaffar Billo*

- ? introduce a culture of quality amongst private sector providers and can advocate on behalf of the private sector health care providers—*Dr. Faisal Sultan*
- ? act as a key resource for the media where journalists can have first-hand exposure to issues relating to the health sector—*Mr. Agha Nasir*

Member's suggestions on **what the Forum should do:**

- ? capitalize on this intellectual strength towards ensuring evidence based decision making in health policy formulation—*Dr. Sameen Siddiqui*
- ? be open and inclusive as to provide the members with a chance to raise all sorts of issues—*Mr. Ayyaz Kiani*
- ? be based on an explicit mission of facilitating the development of National Health Policy—*Dr. Khalif Bile Mohamud*
- ? take up the issue of Corporate Social Responsibility and come up with viable and mutually agreeable means to address it—*Mr. Jergen König*

## APPENDIX

# Agenda of the Debut Meet

A

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### DEBUT MEET

#### Pakistan Health Policy Forum (PHPF)

Date: August 5, 2005

Venue: Islamabad Club, Islamabad

#### Agenda:

12:30-12:45	Participant's personal overviews
12:45-13:00	Pakistan's Health Policy Forum – Debut ? <b>Sania Nishtar</b>
13:00-13:45	<p><b>Commentaries:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✍ <b>Agha Nasir</b>: <i>Pakistan's Health Policy Forum from a media perspective</i></li> <li>✍ <b>A.R. Kamal</b>: <i>Pakistan's Health Policy Forum within the context of development</i></li> <li>✍ <b>Faisal Sultan</b>: <i>The importance of Pakistan's Health Policy Forum from the perspective of enhancing the role of private sector in service delivery</i></li> <li>✍ <b>Fareed ud Din Baqai</b>: <i>Pakistan's Health Policy Forum from the perspective of private medical academia</i></li> <li>✍ <b>Ghaffar Billo</b>: <i>Pakistan's Health Policy Forum and mainstreaming the role of the civil society in health policy</i></li> <li>✍ <b>Gregory Papas</b>: <i>Pakistan's Health Policy Forum - the science and Policy interface</i></li> <li>✍ <b>Inam ul Haq</b>: <i>The importance of Pakistan's Health Policy Forum from a reform-related perspective</i></li> <li>✍ <b>Kausar Khan</b>: <i>The importance of Pakistan's Health Policy Forum from a rights and equity perspective</i></li> <li>✍ <b>Kiani Ayyaz</b>: <i>The importance of Pakistan's Health Policy Forum from a consumers perspective</i></li> <li>✍ <b>Mushtaq Khan</b>: <i>Pakistan's Health Policy Forum – linkages with the Health Policy Unit</i></li> <li>✍ <b>Paul Rukert</b>: <i>The importance of Pakistan's Health Policy Forum from the perspective of meeting programmatic targets such as the MDGs</i></li> <li>✍ <b>Samad Shera</b>: <i>Pakistan's Health Policy Forum and chronic disease control</i></li> <li>✍ <b>Simeen Siddiqui</b>: <i>The importance of Pakistan's Health Policy Forum from a health systems perspective</i></li> <li>✍ <b>Talib Lashari</b>: <i>The importance of Pakistan's Health Policy Forum from a public policy perspective</i></li> <li>✍ <b>Anwar Mehmood</b>, Federal Secretary Health; <i>Pakistan's Health Policy Forum and the State</i></li> </ul>
13:45-14:15	Open house moderated discussion
14:15-14:30	Consensus opting
14:30	Lunch

## APPENDIX B

### List of Forum Members involved with the Debut Meet

\* Attended the meeting

\*\*Could not attend the meeting but have joined the forum

Unmarked names indicate awaited responses

*Please note that all names appear in alphabetical order under in their respective sections*

#### Host of the Forum and meeting convener

Sania Nishtar; Dr*	Heartfile
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#### Public Health

Abdul Ghaffar; Dr.**	Global Forum for Health Research, Geneva
Adnan Hyder; Dr.**	Assistant Professor; John Hopkins University
Arjumand Faisal; Dr.**	Public Health Consultant
Franklin White; Dr.**	International Public Health Consultant
Ghazala Rafiq; Dr*	Instructor, Community Health Sciences, Aga Khan University
Gregory Pappas; Dr.*	Chair; Community Health Sciences, Aga Khan University
Muhammad Amir Khan; Dr.**	Chairman; Association for Social Development
Simeen Siddiqui; Dr.*	Regional Advisor, Health Policy and Planning, WHO EMRO
Tasleem Akhtar; Dr.*	Public Health Specialist
Yasmeen Zaidi; Dr.	Private Consultant
Zafar Mirza; Dr. **	Regional Advisor, WHO EMRO
Zulfiqar Bhutta; Prof.**	Professor of Pediatrics; Aga Khan University

#### Private sector academia and health service delivery

A J Khan; Prof.*	Principal, Frontier Medical College
Faisal Sultan; Dr.*	CEO, Shaukat Khanum Hospital
Farid-ud-Din Baqai; Prof*	Chancellor; Baqai University
Malik H. Mubashir; Prof*	Vice Chancellor, University of Health and Human Sciences
Zaheer Ahmed; Dr.*	President, Shifa International Hospital, Islamabad

#### Health and related areas

Agha Nasir; Mr.*	Electronic Media Specialist
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A. R. Kamal; Mr.*	Director, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics
Ahmed Bilal Mehboob; Mr.**	PILDAT
Anees Jillani; Mr.*	Advocate Supreme Court
Farook Beig; Dr.*	Director Programs; Serendip Productions
Kausar Khan; Ms.*	Social Sector expert; Aga Khan University
M. Suleman; Mr.**	Former Member Central Board of Revenue
Nisar Sheikh; Mr**	Millennium Systems and Consultants Private Limited
Nudrat Bashir; Mrs.*	Additional Secretary, Ministry of Finance
Parvaiz Shaukat/Mazhar Abbas; Mr.*	Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUG)
Representative	Council of Newspaper Editors of Pakistan (CPNE)
Representative	All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS)
Saba Khattak; Dr.**	SDPI
Shafqat Shahzad; Dr.**	
Sajjad Akhtar; Mr.*	Director; Center for Poverty Reduction, Planning Commission
Samina Rizwan; Mrs**	Oracle
Shaheena Maqbool; Ms.**	Freelance reporter
Shahnabaz Wazir Ali; Mrs**	Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy
Tahira Abdullah; Ms.**	Gender Expert
Zeba Sathar; Dr.**	Population Council

#### Development partners

Aldo Landi*/Samia Hashim; Drs.*	UNAIDS
Bernd Appelt; Mr.*	GTZ
Emma Hooper; Ms**	ADB
Fareed Midhat; Dr.**	Asia Foundation
Farooq Azam; Mr.**	TAMA
Inam ul Haq; Dr *	World Bank
Ismat Aziz; Ms.**	CIDA
Jane Edmonson/Inayat Thaver; Drs.*	DFID
Khalif Bile Mohamud; Dr.*	WHO
Nabila Ali; Dr.**	JSI
Paul Rukert; Dr. *	GTZ
Rafah Salam Aziz; Dr.*	UNICEF
Shahida Fazil; Ms. **	UNFPA
Yasmin Qazi; Dr**	Packard Foundation

#### Government representatives

Anwar Mehmmod; Mr.*	Secretary Health
Ashfaq Ahmed; Dr.*	Deputy Director General, International Health
Asma Bokhari; Dr*	Program Manager; MOH
Athar Saeed Dil; Dr.**	Chief Health; Ministry of Health

Ejaz Rahim; Mr.**	Cabinet Secretary
Fazale Hadi; Dr.**	Executive Director; PIMS
Hajra Tariq Aziz; Dr.	Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health
Haroon Jehangir. Dr.*	Program Manager; MOH
Huma Qureshi; Dr.**	Director; PMRC
K.A. Karamat; Lt Gen (Rtd) Prof.**	Director NIH
M Shafiquddin; Dr.**	Chief Health, Planning Commission
Majid Rajput; Dr.**	Director General Health
Mohammad Zafar; Dr.*	Health Policy Unit; NWFP
Mushtaq Khan; Dr.*	Chief; Health Policy Unit
Rehan Hafeez; Dr.**	Program Manager; MOH
Roshan Khurseed Barocha; Mrs.**	Senate Standing Committee on Health
Sattar Chaudhry; Mr.**	Health Education Specialist
Sohail Ahmed; Mr.**	Former Secretary Health Punjab
Zahid Larik; Dr.*	DDG PHC

#### Representatives of Pharmaceutical Associations

Ahmed Atif Mirza; Dr.*	President; Pakistan Pharmaceuticals Medical Directors Association
Iqbal Ahmed Qarshi; Mr.**	Pakistan Tibbi Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association
Juergen Koenig; Mr.* Zafar Mooraj; Mr.**	Chairman; Pharma Bureau
Khalid Saeed Bukhari; Mr.**	Pakistan Pharmacist Association
Nisar Ahmed Chaudhry; Dr.**	National Council for Homeopathy
Saeed Allawalla; Mr.*	President; Pakistan Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association

#### Health professionals and representatives of professional societies

Afzal Ahmed; Lt. Gen, Dr.*	Surgeon General; Pakistan Army
Azhar Faruqi; Prof**	Prof of Cardiology
Fareed Aslam Minhas; Prof *	Prof. of Psychiatry
Malik Mubashir; Prof*	Prof. of Psychiatry
Nasir ud din Azam; Prof.*	Prof of Medicine
Nighat Durrani; Ms.**	Pakistan Nursing Federation
Riaz Shahid; Dr.**	President, Pakistan Society of Family Physicians
Rizwan Naseer; Dr.**	Rescue 1122
Samad Shera; Prof *	Diabetic Association of Pakistan
Sher Shah; Prof**	Pakistan Medical Association
Umar Ayub/Arshad Rana Dr.*	Pakistan Medical Association

## NGOs

Ali Qadir; Mr**	The Network for Consumer Protection
Ayyaz Kiani; Mr.*	The Network for Consumer Protection
Ghaffar Billo; Dr*	HANDS
Kamyla Marvi Tappal; Dr**	Ahung
Khawar Mumtaj; Mr**	Shirkat Gah
Madeline Wright; Ms**	Save the Children, UK
Mohsina Bilgrami; Dr**	Marie Stopes
Ruth Pilaf. Dr; Ilyas Khan; Dr.**	Marie Adelaide
Sania Nishtar; Dr *	Heartfile
Sono Khangrani; Dr**	Thardeep
Syed Zulfiqar Ali; Dr.	AKHS
Talib Lashari/Ghulam Abbas; Dr.**	Peoples Health Movement
Tanveer Ahmed; Mr*	HANDS
Tanya Khan, Ms**	Rural Support Program Network

## Appendix C: Virtual Dialogue

### Responses to questions about the forum during the weeks before the Debut Meet

#### Question 1

**Zulfiqar Bhutta:** The concept is timely and I believe will meet with considerable support provided that the forum truly lives up to its premise i.e. it can raise the voice of reason and science without fear or favor. That is the reason why I feel that although members from the public sector are welcome, they should come to the Forum as individuals and not representatives of their constituencies. That is also the reason why we should not insist on institutional buy-in as I have witnessed even the most robust NGOs wilt at the mere thought of losing donor support.

**Answer- Sania Nishtar:** The credibility of this forum will indeed come from its intellectual independence and the extent to which it will uphold evidence in articulating its Viewpoints and Statements – its key deliverables. I suppose in a way, it is also a matter of personal professional credibility when people like us get closely associated with an effort such as this; it is for this particular reason, also, that I share the same concern with you and hope to have likeminded colleagues on board so as to be able to safeguard the integrity of our outputs.

The issue of institutional buy-in and its possible negative implications, particularly from an NGO donor interface in the manner you highlighted; given the bilaterals-GoP relationship is something against which safeguards must be factored in. One way to address this would be to revisit the rationale of 'institutional memberships' within this framework. However, the other way to get around this – without radical changes in the structure – would be to articulate ethics and norms, which is what I will factor into the Statement to obviate such concerns. (the revised version of the Statement will be circulated prior to the meeting)

#### Question 2

**Zulfiqar Bhutta:** I do feel that a mere health focus may not suffice. Although the concept document talks about social determinants and equity, in my opinion health and development are intertwined. From a position that health and development must occur concurrently, I am now impressed by evidence from elsewhere that in the wake of grinding poverty and inequity, it is economic subsistence and purchasing power that makes a difference to care seeking in health systems. Thus my plea to bring in first rate health and development economists on board from the very beginning.

**Answer - Sania Nishtar:** I agree completely. It is envisaged that the Forum will view and treat 'health' in its inter-sectoral scope and I am making sure that it has the right blend of experts on board so as to allow this. Indeed many factors which determine health status range much broader than those that are within the realm of the health sector and therefore allied issues in relation to economic and social welfare, economic development, social justice, politics, trade and environment will be appropriately featured.

#### Question 3

**Zulfiqar Bhutta:** I hope that Forum members will be willing to debate openly the pros and cons of many government policies that influence health spending and health. However, if certain members of the Forum will stifle debate on issues of defense spending, nuclear armaments and delivery systems and health system corruption, then the Forum would go the way of several past endeavors.

**Answer - Sania Nishtar:** Yes I am indeed cognizant of such a potential risk and have therefore attempted to mitigate this concern by organizing the 'structure' and its mechanisms in a manner which are geared, both to preempting this and getting around it. I am referring in particular to the "Membership's support of deliverables" as articulated in the Forum Statement. As you will notice, the Consensus statements need a two third majority whereas View points need to be cleared only by moderators. This will mean that some of us, as moderators, will have the flexibility to put online or publish viewpoints which might not have the clearance of the entire Forum. This would be significant as it would allow us to have a Forum Deliverable even though it might not have explicit endorsement at large, which you do not expect in any case.

#### Question 4

**Zulfiqar-Bhutta:** next steps?

**Answer - Sania Nishtar:** The priority is to get the invited membership endorse the Forum Statement; I will be circulating a revised version early next week. The next – as outlined in the medium term plan – is for some of the key members to get together in Islamabad early next month. We can deliberate on the timing, structure and the rationale of the larger meeting then; it would be important for us to have a deliverable by then or conversely use the meeting as a process towards developing a deliverable

#### Question 5

**Zulfiqar Bhutta:** I also feel that public health research and working towards evidence-based policy making must receive greater prominence in the objectives and work plan of the forum

**Answer - Sania Nishtar:** though it is implicit that the Forum has been constituted with the objective of supporting and assisting with the upholding of evidence in the decision making process, thanks for pointing out that it does not come through clearly in the Statement as it is presently articulated; I will rephrase sections in light of this observation. On the issue of public health research, the Medium Term Operational Plans' point 3 alludes to its importance and highlights the specific operational areas where it will be scoped, but as in the former case, I will see where else it can be highlighted as it is clearly a priority area and one that the Forum is likely to engage in actively.

#### Question 6

**Simeen Siddiqui:** How will the independence of this Forum be ensured?

**Answer - Sania Nishtar:** The statement of the Forum has had inputs from international legal experts particularly with regard to ensuring its independence. You would notice that we say it upfront in the statement's anchor piece even before articulating its mission. This intent is reflected in the manner in which the structure has been developed which is strongly aligned on democratic principles and will obviate dominance of an organization or individual. You would notice that there is also a justification for why we are the host organization for the initial 3 year duration. We will not have office bearers and meetings would be convened in a round table configuration.

#### Question 7

**Inayat Thaver:** Do you want to restrict to health or include in it the population and/or reproductive health, also.

**Answer - Sania Nishtar:** The Gateway Paper,<sup>2</sup> which the statement refers to and which is envisaged to set the tone for the Forum, views health in its inter-sectoral scope from a health systems rather than a programmatic dimension. However, the annual consultative mechanism and the other deliverables of the Forum will take up programmatic issues and cross cutting issues.

#### Question 8

**Inayat Thaver:** It appears that the Forum would be addressing the MDGs and PRSP. Spelling this out would give it more credibility.

**Answer - Sania Nishtar:** Yes it will amongst other things; however I think that the credibility of the Forum will come from its constitution, its intellectual independence, the ingenuity of its indigenous response and the robustness of its scientific processes and deliverables rather than the absolute 'buy into' specific themes, which it will, of course pay due attention to

#### Question 9

**Inayat Thaver:** There are other forums or associations which are addressing more or less same issue. How do you see this forum something different or having an added value?

**Answer - Sania Nishtar:** amongst other things, this forum is focused on mainstreaming the role of the civil society organizations and the people into the health policy process and providing a platform for stakeholders to interface with national policy makers; in addition it will review and analyze issues and generate policy positions and other deliverables from a completely independent standpoint. Moreover, this is meant to be an ongoing activity with an outcome orientation. Such a forum does not exist. The other forum, which you may be referring to – the Public Health Forum – as you know has a distinct programmatic focus in the area of maternal and child health

#### Question 10

**Inayat Thaver:** How are you going to address the issue of duplication of efforts? There is already a NHPU at federal level and similar units in NWFP and Punjab.

**Answer - Sania Nishtar:** There is going to be no duplication of efforts; I stress again on independence and the civil society perspective. The initiatives you refer to are public sector owned/housed, which we will be happy to work with.

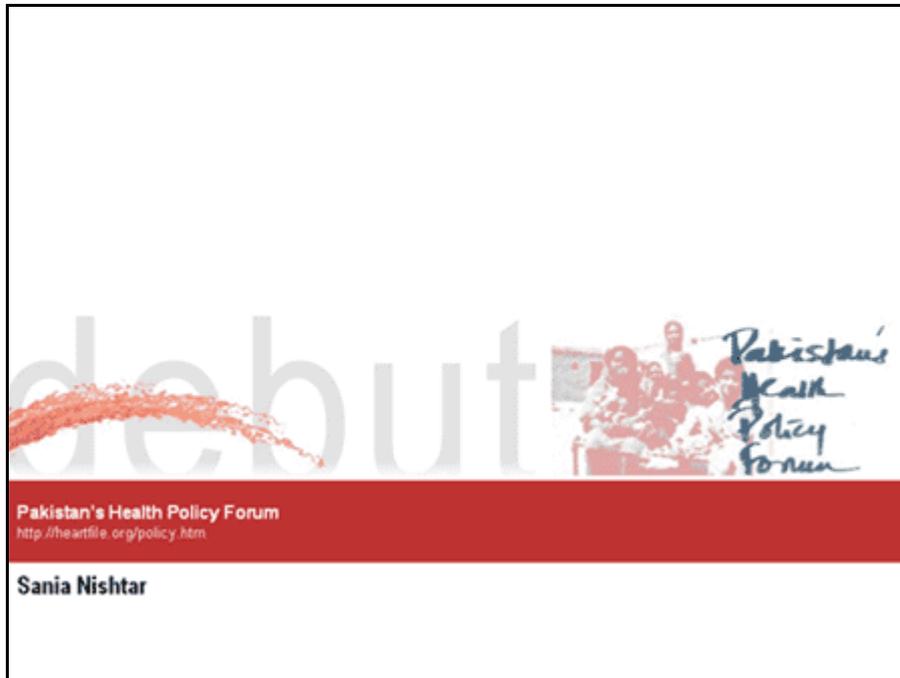
If you read the statement, we clearly articulate in the section on 'what it will provide' that we will be supportive to the role of public-sector initiated policy and planning initiatives. I was referring in particularly to the initiatives you referred to.

I have had meetings with Dr. Mushtaq who is on board and happy to be part of the Apex group and seems very supportive; I have assured him of our intent to work closely and collaboratively and there is a great deal of synergy at both ends. The Unit in NWFP is also in the loop and well aware.

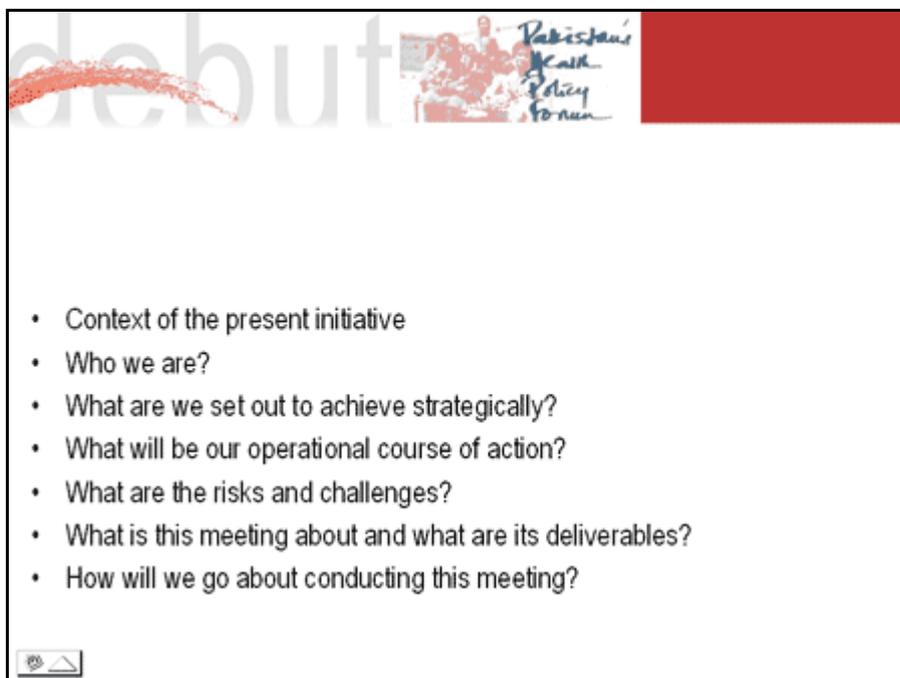
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<sup>2</sup> Forum Statement - Medium Term Operational Plan – point 2

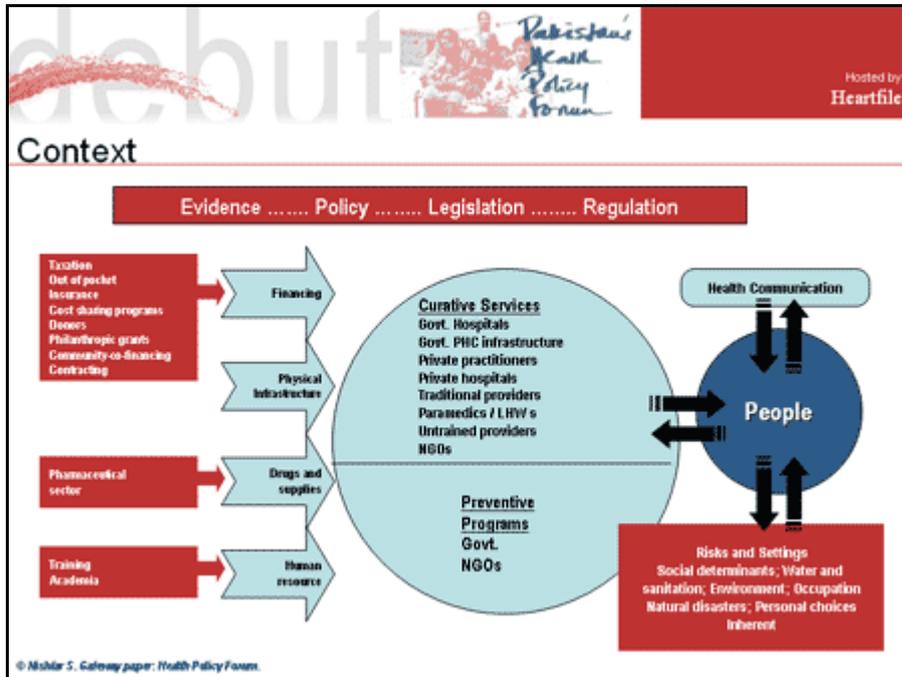
## Appendix E: presentation



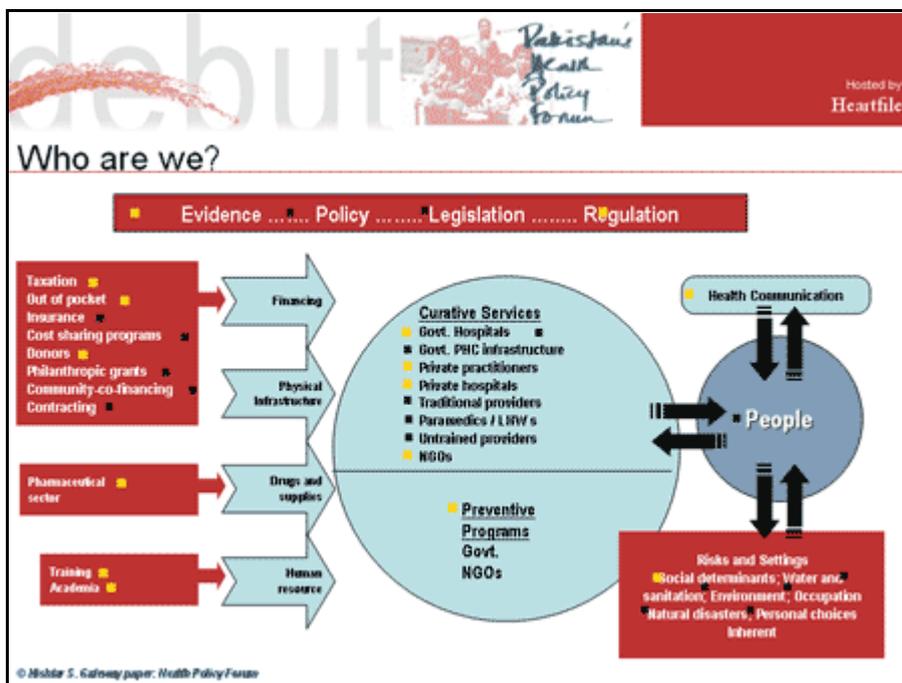
Slide 1



Slide 2



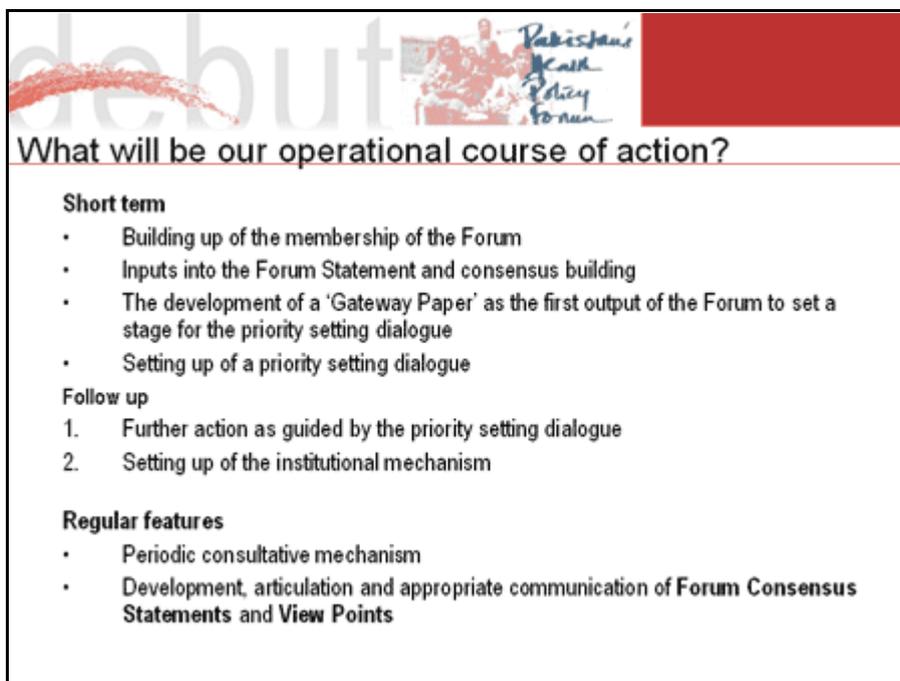
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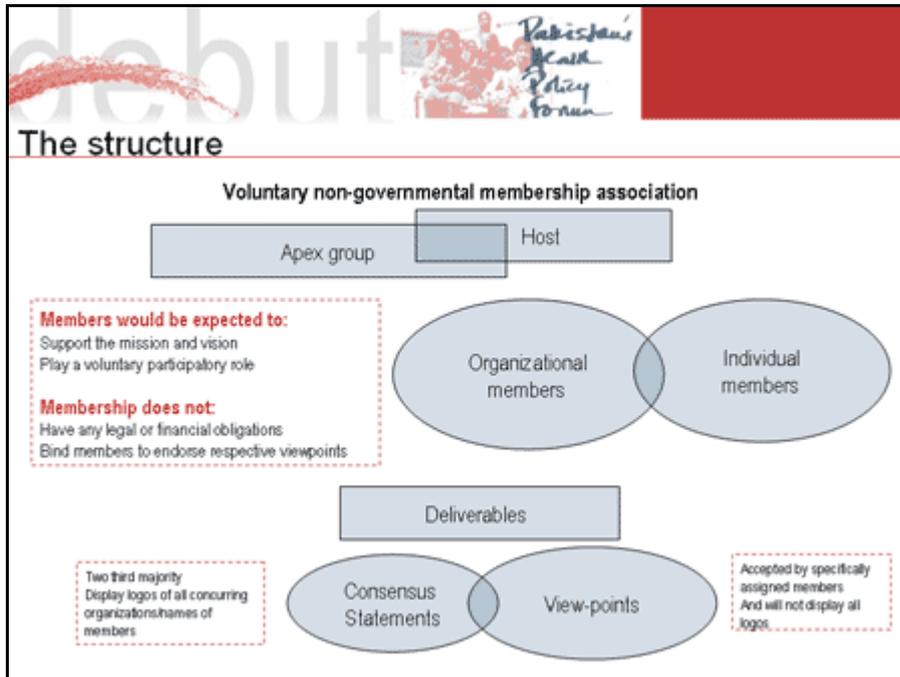
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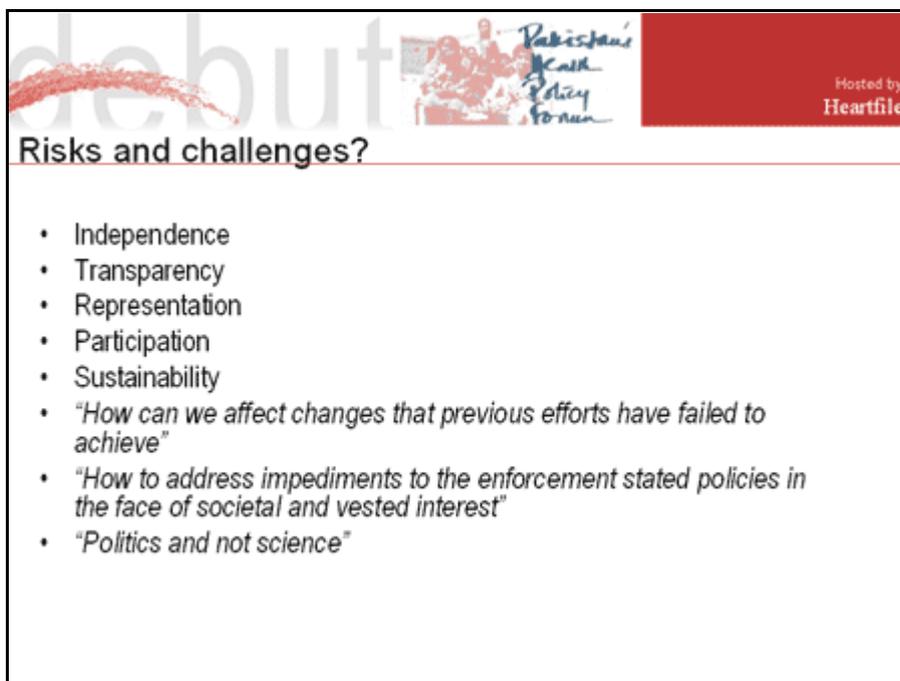
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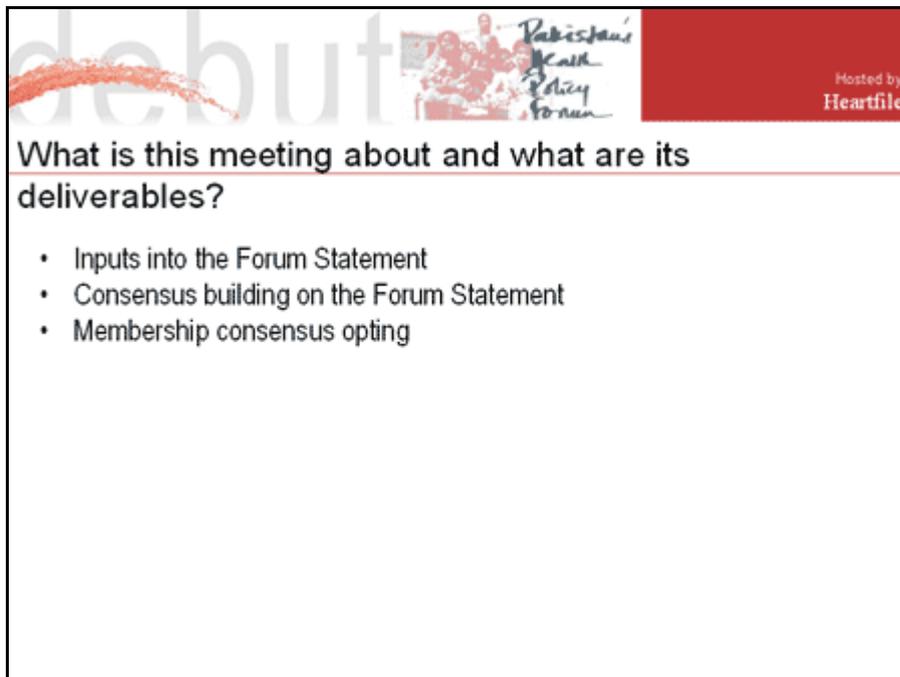
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Slide 8



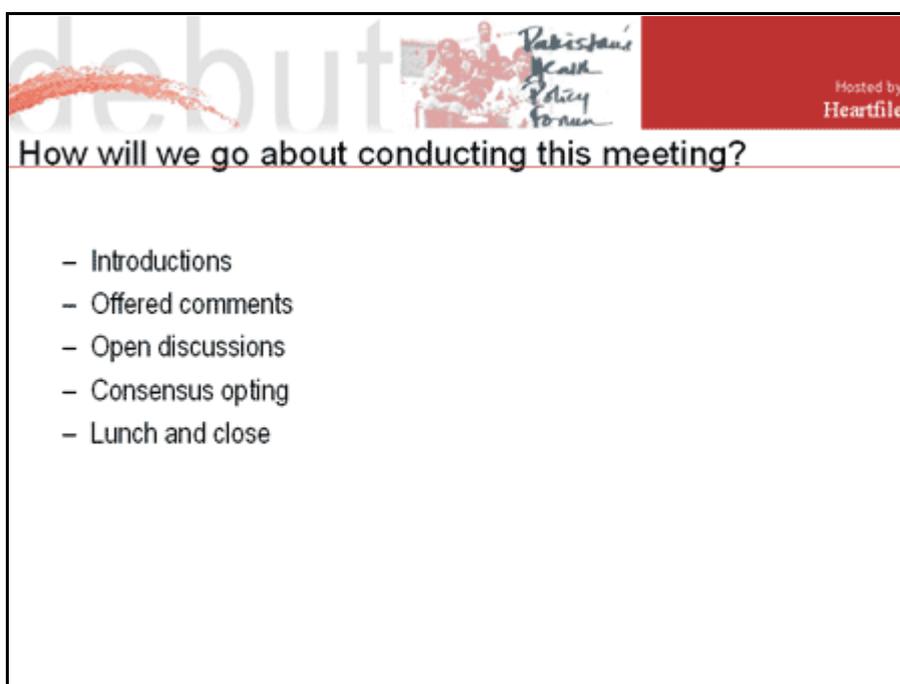
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Hosted by Heartfile

**What is this meeting about and what are its deliverables?**

- Inputs into the Forum Statement
- Consensus building on the Forum Statement
- Membership consensus opting

Slide 9



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Hosted by Heartfile

**How will we go about conducting this meeting?**

- Introductions
- Offered comments
- Open discussions
- Consensus opting
- Lunch and close

Slide 10

## Public Affairs Department

Publication:	The NEWS	Date:	August 8, 2005	City:	Islamabad
Circulation:	80,000	Page:	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Country:	Pakistan
Journalist:	Shahina Maqbool	Deadline:	-	Language:	English
Arranged By:	Heartfile Public Affairs Department	Photograph:	-	Column Inches:	
Head line:	Pakistan Health Policy Forum launched with spectacular participation				

The NEWS International, Monday, August 8, 2005

## Pakistan's Health Policy Forum launched with spectacular participation

Shahina Maqbool

ISLAMABAD: The debut and launching of Pakistan's Health Policy Forum witnessed an unprecedented participation of a wide range of stakeholders from various health sectors within the country here Saturday.

For the first time in the history of 'health' in Pakistan, representatives of the government, private healthcare providers and hospitals, NGOs, the donor community, the pharmaceutical sector, academics, development economists, social sector experts public health professionals and professional societies decided to sit on one forum to resolve issues. Pakistan's Health Policy Forum is the brainchild of Dr. Sania Nasir, who described it as "a think tank with an institutional mechanism - designed to follow-through intellectual outputs into action."

At the dramatic debut of the Forum held at Islamabad Club, Dr. Sania said the Forum is a platform for synchronizing stakeholder efforts within the health sector, mainstreaming the role of the civil society, people, and the private sector into the decision making process and creating an interface between all stakeholders in the health sector.

Drawing on its think tank capacity to analyze strategic issues, the Forum is envisaged to offer evidence-based, locally feasible

consensus-driven policy solutions, in support of which it will also take an advocacy orientation. It is also expected to serve as a catalyst for change through policy and technical support and will additionally advocate on behalf of the people in addition to promoting accountability of decisions. "We want to join hands to provide solutions; the idea is not to be confrontational but to capitalize on collective thinking and problem solving on democratic principles," Dr. Sania explained. The key ethics and principles of the Forum include its intellectual independence; neutrality, evidence-based and equity orientation and its capacity to produce an indigenous response to health systems issues.

Addressing the august gathering, Secretary Health Anwar Mehmood lauded the initiative and said that the intellectual independence and neutrality of the Forum will be respected. He reiterated his support for the Forum. "We will be a part of this Forum and will walk as far as the Forum wants us to walk; we will not try to dominate the Forum," Anwar Mehmood assured. Speaking on behalf of the Minister for Health, Mohammad Nasir Khan, he said the Minister also believes that such collaborative efforts must be carried forward and has requested the participants to join hands for a cause that is dear to all.

The impressive list of partici-

pants included key Ministry of Health officials; CEOs of private hospitals; vice chancellors of private medical universities such as Dr. Fareed ud Din Baqai and Prof A J Khan; Sameen Siddiqui and Khalif Bile Muhammad from WHO; Mushtaq Khan chief of NHPU; Lieut. Gen. Afzal Ahmed, Surgeon General; Gregory Pappas, Chair CHS, AKU; NGOs including Heartfile, The Network, HANDS, Marie Stopes; development partners from the World Bank, GTZ, DFID, UNICEF and UNAIDS; representatives of the Pakistan Medical Association and many other professional associations.

In addition, President, Pakistan Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association; Chairman, Pharma Bureau and President, Pakistan Pharmaceuticals Medical Directors Association were also present, as were Professors Nasir ud Din Azam Khan, Samad Shera, Malik Mubashar and Fareed Minhas. Other sectors which impact health were represented by A R Kamal, director PIDE, social scientist Kammar Khan, Agha Nasir from the media and lawyer Aness Jillani.

The next step is the release of the Gateway Paper of the Forum in order to allow an initial assessment of the issues and challenges and to propose possible solutions to bridge gaps. Dr. Sania has taken personal responsibility for this huge task and hopes to release the paper soon.