



The Istanbul declaration for global health

More than 2,300 public health professionals from around the world attended the 12th World Public Health Congress, in Istanbul, between April 27th and May 1st, 2009. Participants from 120 countries from all corners of the globe advocated for different disciplines and composed an eclectic and propitious audience for a profound discussion on the part each individual – as well as national associations, at the country level, and the Federation, at the global level – plays in facing the challenges currently posed to the field of Public Health.

The result was the ‘Istanbul Declaration’, a call to action on the serious health problems faced by populations on account of the deep economic and social crisis the world was thrown in because of the irresponsible actions of the international financial capital and the governments of some central capitalist countries.

Unemployment, inadequate access to food, medication and other essential goods for health and the quality of life, as well as a decrease in public social protection services – precisely when people most needed them – are among the most harmful consequences of the current crisis. These recent phenomena are now joined by the chronic effects of the so-called “unfair globalization”, which was exposed by the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization (ILO, 2004), as well as by climate change, which was caused by emissions from rich countries.

The effects on health conditions and the quality of life were immediate and have now hit not only the poorest regions and countries – which have been chronically impacted – but also poor, fragile and vulnerable individuals, that is, the impoverished working- and middle-classes in all countries in the world.

These circumstances urgently need to be changed, and the measures suggested in the Istanbul Declaration are now presented to the readers of the Italian Journal of Public Health.

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