



# 1st Latin American Conference on Research and innovation for Health

**Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, April 2008**

Hosted by the Ministry of Health of Brazil (Department of Science and Technology); jointly organised with the Council on Health Research for Development (COHRED), the Global Forum for Health Research, INSalud Mexico, the NicaSalud Network Federation, and Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)/World Health Organization (WHO). The Latin American Conference on Research and Innovation for Health was the first meeting of its kind, to bring together a broad range of people and organisations with an interest in health research and health research systems.

## Objectives

- Bring together countries in Latin America to discuss successes and challenges in research for health and the development of their national health research systems; - Strengthen the links between the health research and the science, technology and innovation sectors; - Define strategies and actions for future cooperation within Latin America; - Stimulate the formation of partnerships that will facilitate addressing health equity and development through research; - Increase the interest in external research sponsors in supporting this process.

## Outcomes and outputs

- **Research System Development:** Recognition by key national partners (ministries, research institutes, NGOs) of the need to develop their national health research systems, based on effective health research policies, processes and practices. - **Strategies:** Development of a set of strategies for action at national, regional and global levels to advance research for health in the region. - **Authoritative report:** A conference report that can be used by Latin American ministers and other partners to prepare a Latin American input for the Global Ministerial Forum on Research for Health (Bamako, Mali, November 2008).

## Participants

Participants were senior officials from ministries of health, science and technology, and other ministries who are involved with research for health; senior staff of research institutes, civil society organizations - including professional associations and research councils, research funding agencies, development agencies, and research networks. The focus is on Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries in Latin America, and on organizations working in or with these countries.

## Conference themes

- **National Health Research Systems:** Participants will discuss the current status of national health research systems in the region, and work on strategies and action plans



for strengthening these. Issues covered include: priority setting processes for health research; health research and science & technology policy development; management of health research systems and the linkage to science & technology systems; and the bioethical frameworks of research for health in the countries.

- **Financing for research for health:** This theme will focus on the identification of innovative strategies for funding of health research systems and health research priorities at both the national and regional levels, looking at funding sources from private and public sectors as well as interactions between private and public partners.
- **Innovation, product development and access:** The discussion will consider interactions between health research and the productive sector towards product development and innovation and how the potential of products derived from health research in Latin America can reinforce innovation. The group will also discuss issues of access to products from research, strategies defined to ensure their affordability for the poorest segments of the population, and on long term investments planned to ensure innovation is relevant for the nation.
- **Human resources for health research:** Discussion will consider strategies for capacity building at individual, institutional and system level, capacity strengthening, evaluation and brain drain. It will focus on long terms strategies planned and/or implemented by countries to ensure staff retention, training and re-training, as well as the activities and incentives aiming at creating the infrastructure and conditions to attract returning scientists back home.

**Regional collaboration** is a cross-cutting theme for the working groups. All groups will consider "south-south collaboration" between countries in the region, between existing regional research networks, with key northern partners (research institutes, funders of research), and identify mechanisms that can stimulate collaboration.

## **Format**

The conference used an interactive format. Including working groups, roundtables and other techniques that encourage participation of all, with some plenary sessions. Participants brought evidence and information from their countries to the meeting's theme groups. Each theme group developed and presented plans for action or further work.

## **Reports**

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