Health Diplomacy: RX for Peace

COMMENTARY

By Susan Schissel

The Progression Times 26.2.2007

We are in the midst of a global health crisis. The spread of diseases like HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis is reaching pandemic proportions. The United Nations has declared 2007 the International Year of the Person Living with a Disability, highlighting the urgent need to address the health needs of people with disabilities.

This crisis requires a new approach to international health. We must prioritize the health and well-being of all societies, not just those in developed countries. The UN General Assembly has recently adopted a resolution calling for the establishment of a High-Level Panel on Health in the Context of the Millennium Development Goals. This panel will provide recommendations for achieving the health targets set in the MDGs.

In order to address the global health crisis, we must address the social determinants of health. This includes addressing poverty, inequality, and discrimination. We must also address the environmental and political factors that contribute to the spread of disease.

The United States has a significant role to play in the global health arena. We must lead by example and work with other countries to achieve the MDGs. We must also support research and development of new treatments and vaccines.

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, which was established in 2002, has made significant progress in providing treatment to people in need. However, more funding is needed to achieve the goals of the MDGs.

In conclusion, we must prioritize global health in our foreign policy. We must work to address the social determinants of health and support research and development of new treatments and vaccines. We must also ensure that all societies have access to quality health care.

※※※

*By Susan Schissel, a former diplomat with the U.S. Department of State.