WHO statement - 25 September 2015- The World Health Organization welcomes the launch of the 2030 Sustainable Development (SDG) agenda, and commits to work with partners around the world to achieve the new development goals.

Building on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the SDG agenda demonstrates unprecedented scope and ambition. Poverty eradication, health, education, and food security and nutrition remain priorities, but the 17 SDGs also encompass a broad range of economic, social and environmental objectives, as well as the promise of more peaceful and inclusive societies.

SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages, profiles health as a desirable outcome in its own right. Importantly, however, health is also presented as an input to other goals, and a reliable measure of how well sustainable development is progressing in general.

The health goal itself includes new targets for key issues on which major progress has been made under the MDGs. The global HIV, TB and malaria epidemics have been turned around. Worldwide, child mortality and maternal mortality have dropped greatly, by 53% and more than 40% respectively since 1990.

But much remains to be done. Reports of global progress have often masked discrepancies in progress between and within countries. There is a recognition of the need to focus not only on ensuring that people survive, but that they thrive as well.

It has also become clear that the world would be a healthier place if there were global targets for a much wider range of issues. Importantly, the new goal includes targets for tackling noncommunicable diseases. It also covers health security; reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health; infectious diseases and universal health coverage.

WHO looks forward to collaborating with partners to meet all these targets, and particularly welcomes the inclusion of universal health coverage. Universal health coverage expresses the very spirit of the new development agenda, with its emphasis on equity and social inclusion that leaves no one behind.