WHAT: There is ample evidence that many factors beyond the health sector, including education, employment status, income level, gender and ethnicity, have a marked influence on how healthy a person is. In all countries of the world - whether low-, middle- or high-income - there are wide disparities in the health status of different social groups. The lower an individual's socio-economic position, the higher their risk of poor health.

The World Health Organization (WHO) is convening the World Conference on Social Determinants of Health to give governments and stakeholders a forum to agree on a global plan of action to reduce health inequities by addressing their broader causes. At the end of the conference, governments are expected to endorse a political declaration, expressing commitment to improve the broader social conditions that affect people's health. Over 100 governments have confirmed their participation so far, including more than 60 ministers of health.

WHEN: 19-21 October 2011. The conference will start at 14:00 on Wednesday, 19 October (local time in Rio de Janeiro) and will close around 14:00 on Friday, 21 October.

WHERE: Hotel Sofitel Copacabana, Avenida Atlantica 4240, Copacabana, Rio de Janeiro, RJ 22070002, Brazil

WHO: Michel Temer, Vice President of Brazil, and Dr Margaret Chan, Director-General of WHO, will attend along with approximately 1000 participants representing governments, UN agencies, the scientific community and civil society organizations.

A press conference will be held at 12:00 on 19 October at the Hotel Sofitel Copacabana with the participation of Dr Margaret Chan, Director-General of WHO, and Dr Alexandre Padilha, Minister of Health of Brazil.

The World Conference on Social Determinants of Health will be webcast at http://www.canal.fiocruz.br/determinantes/

and http://www.canal.fiocruz.br/determinantes/index_salas.php .

The webcast will begin at 14.00 on 19 October (Rio de Janeiro time) and will be available in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese.

For more information about the conference, please visit: http://www.who.int/sdhconference .