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Editorial

In 2011, Brazil's economy was ranked as the sixth largest economy in the world.^a This economic growth was achieved following inflation stabilization and increasing social and economic inclusion of the poorest through public policies including annual increases to minimum wage, direct conditional cash transfer, increased access to credit and to college education, increased formal labor force, among others. However, in 2010, Brazil was ranked 84th in terms of human development index.^b

Experiences in Brazil and in other countries worldwide show that economic growth does not necessarily lead to human development. It must be recognized that economic growth and social development bear a highly complex and multifaceted relationship, and it is thus paramount to link policies to promote economic growth and social policies so that an increase in the gross domestic product (GDP) is accompanied by improvements in the standard of living of all Brazilians.

The development of the health sector is particularly coupled up with growth and development. It can be analyzed from at least two perspectives. There is, on one hand, reciprocal relationships in which improvements in health favors development while at the same time it contributes to improved health. On the other hand, health is in itself a major economic sector accounting for nearly 10% of the world's GDP.

Many movements and events have shaped Brazilian society in recent years calling for changes. First, the *Sistema Único de Saúde* (SUS, Brazilian National Health System) was established, an advancement that ensured universal health care to the entire population. Following this pathway, emphasis has been given to the promotion of the Health Sciences and Technology (HST) component, whose main milestone is the 1st National Conference on HST, held in 1994. The Conference has set the ground for establishing the Department of Health Sciences and Technology within the Brazilian Ministry of Health as well as for introducing HST policies as part of national health policies. The 2nd National Conference on Health Sciences, Technology, and Innovation, held in 2004, reiterated these needs and introduced innovation as a key issue. Innovation is gaining momentum in Brazil.

The establishment of both the Department of Science, Technology and Strategic Inputs within the Brazilian Ministry of Health in 2003, that incorporated and improved the Department of Science and Technology, and the Department of Health Care Industrial Complex in 2007 has put the health sector at the center of the debate on development and science, technology, and health innovation (HSTI) policies. At the core of the process of shaping and implementing HSTI policies is the health sector as the technical-scientific community has envisioned for years.

Recently, the Brazilian Association of Collective Health has gathered more than 8,000 people in its 10th Brazilian Congress on Collective Health entitled "Health is Development: Science for Citizenship." Such an approach is rapidly growing in Brazil.

^a World Bank. GDP ranking. Washington, DC; s.d. [cited 2012 Dec 4]. Available from: <http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/GDP-ranking-table>

^b United Nations Development Programme. Human Development Index (HDI). New York; 2010 [cited 2012 Dec 4]. Available from: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/hdi/>

The *Revista de Saúde Pública* (RSP), being fully aware of its role and of the trends in its own field, is now publishing a special supplement on Health and Development.

In recognition of that the RSP has opened up space for wider dissemination of this subject and to help overcome what Gadelha (2012) pointed out in the Foreword of this issue: *“It is as if we have reached the limit where Brazil is facing new and old driving forces in a vicious circle of dependency, inequality, and slow economic dynamics in health. To achieve its ‘sectorial’ goals the health sector has seemingly encountered insurmountable barriers that have been erected by our very own development pattern.”*

In its regular issues the RSP has published many articles that explore these complex relationships in almost all events of the health-disease-care process. But it is now publishing for the first time a supplement that examines in depth from the aforementioned dual perspective the interactions between health and development in Brazil.

In addition to a fresh approach, readers are offered the most comprehensive set of articles on the interactions between health and development. The selected articles address the mutual determination of health and development discussing both specific topics including the historical evolution of social inequalities in health of the elderly, changes in dietary intake and physical activity among schoolchildren, the consistency of men’s health policy and the need for research on chronic diseases and general issues including economic and social aspects of the Health Care Industrial Complex and advances and challenges in coordinating health and development.

They also discuss the health sector as part of the economy and technology industry, the university-industry collaboration and collaborative networks of health sciences, technology and innovation, the dynamics of innovation in subindustries of pharmaceuticals and health biotechnology, electromechanics and services, health care innovation from a territorial perspective and even advances and challenges of political management of health technologies and information management system of pharmaceutical care.

All articles can certainly contribute to broaden our knowledge on the interactions between health and development focusing on the need to have economic activities including the production of goods and services directly related to health sector guided by Brazil’s health and social priorities.

Far from ending this discussion, the RSP’s intention was to expand it in a consistent and innovative manner honoring its legacy as a major publication in health in Brazil.

REFERENCE

Gadelha CAG. Saúde e desenvolvimento: uma nova abordagem para uma nova política [apresentação]. *Rev Saude Publica*. 2012;46 (Supl):5-8.