

PAHO COMMISSION ON EQUITY AND HEALTH INEQUALITIES IN THE AMERICAS

Why a Commission on equity and health inequalities?

In recent years there have been many improvements to health in the Americas, as there have been worldwide, but significant inequalities persist. These improvements are not consistent throughout the countries of the Americas and between social groups, specifically within the most at risk populations living in **situations of vulnerability**, whose well being and health continue to be adversely affected.

What does the Commission do?

Given the need to promote actions to reduce these inequalities, the Director of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) established a **Commission on Equity and Health Inequalities in the Americas** in 2016. This group of experts will evaluate the evidence on the causes of inequality in the Americas and recommend actions that can improve health and wellbeing of all people in the region, regardless of gender, ethnic identity or social status. The Commission works within a human rights framework and focuses on inequalities related to gender and ethnicity, examining how social, economic, environmental, political and cultural factors shape health.

The Commission's final report and recommendations will provide new ways of understanding and prioritizing equity and inequalities in health.

Who makes up the Commission?

The Commission is composed of **12 highly respected individuals** from different fields who are recognized for their work on equity, gender, ethnicity, and human rights in the region of the Americas. The Commission is chaired by **Sir Michael Marmot**, Director of the Institute of Health and Equity at University College London (UCL/IHE), and co-chaired by Nila Heredia, Executive Secretary of the Organismo Andino de Salud (Andean Regional Health Organization), and María Paula Romo, Dean of Jurisprudence, Social Science and Communication at the International University of Ecuador. The other commissioners are: Víctor Abramovich (Argentina), Mabel Bianco (Argentina), Cindy Blackstock (Canada), Jo Ivey Boufford (United States), Paulo Buss (Brazil), Pastor Murillo (Colombia), Tracy Robinson (Jamaica), David Satcher (United States) and Cesar Victora (Brazil).

The UCL/IHE and PAHO's Cross-Cutting Themes (CCTs) Working Group make up the Commission's Secretariat.



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How does the Commission work?

Fifteen countries of the Americas have agreed to partner with the Commission, including Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the United States, El Salvador, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

The Commission will collect and analyze data from a variety of sources, including among others, official national sources, civil society and academia. These countries will also provide **case studies** that reflect successful outcomes or examples of measures that have failed to improve equity and health inequalities, all of which will inform the recommendations of the Commission.

Meetings

The Commissioners meet periodically with a defined agenda of work to analyze the evidence and prepare the final recommendations. These meetings also provide an opportunity to learn from experiences in partner countries, as well as allowing them to gather input from members of **civil society, government and academia** on local experiences on equity and inequality in health.

In 2016, the Commission met twice at PAHO headquarters in Washington, DC, United States. In 2017, they met in Bogota, Colombia, and San José, Costa Rica. In 2018, another meeting will be held in Trinidad and Tobago, where the Commissioners will advance their work.



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Evidence Reviews

The UCL/IHE will conduct evidence reviews in **ten areas** that the Commission will focus on. These areas range from the interaction of social and biological factors throughout the life course, cultural and socioeconomic factors and the political context, as well as access to health services. These reviews will collect the most up-to-date data, as well as evidence and good practices on health equity, and will be used as input for the Commission's final recommendations.

Final Report

The UCL/IHE will prepare a final report, containing analysis of evidence, case studies and recommendations for action including a framework to monitor their effectiveness in closing gaps in health inequality.

For more information go to: <http://www.instituteoftheequity.org/about-us/the-institute-of-health-equity/our-current-work/paho-commission>