

# PAHO COMMISSION ON EQUITY AND HEALTH INEQUALITIES IN THE AMERICAS

## What does the Commission do?

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 and social groups, specifically within **the most vulnerable populations**, who continue to be affected by preventable diseases.

Given the need to promote actions to reduce these inequalities, 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 and propose actions that can improve health of the people in the region. The Commission will work with a focus on human rights, taking into account gender, ethnicity, and the social, economic, environmental, political, and cultural arrangements that shape health.

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

## Who makes up the Commission?

PAHO has appointed **13 commissioners**, who are experts 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). IHE and the Cross-Cutting Themes (CCTs) Working Group at PAHO make up the Commission's Secretariat.



## How does the region of the Americas collaborate?

**Fifteen countries** of the Americas have partnered with the Commission to collaborate on data collection and the development of a framework to monitor their findings. Partner countries include Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the United States, El Salvador, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

These countries will also provide information and advice on **case studies** that reflect successful outcomes or that have failed to improve equity and health inequalities. They will also contribute suggestions that will help form the recommendations that will be made by the Commission at the end of its work.

## How does the Commission work?

### *Meetings*

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

In 2016, the Commission met twice at PAHO headquarters in Washington, DC, United States. In 2017, they met in Bogota, Colombia, and two additional meetings are currently planned for Costa Rica in June and the United States (Atlanta) in October. In 2018, another meeting will be held in Trinidad and Tobago, where the commissioners will advance their work on the recommendations. After a consultation process, the Commission will present its final report in the last quarter of 2018.



### *Evidence Reviews*

The IHE will conduct evidence reviews in the **ten areas** that the Commission will focus on. These range from social and biological factors during the life course, socioeconomic factors and the political context, as well as material, cultural and health services. These reports will present the most up-to-date data, as well as evidence and good practices on health equity, and will be used as the inputs for the Commission's final recommendations.

### *Final Report*

IHE will draft a final report, containing analysis of evidence, case studies and proposals for action including a framework to monitor their effectiveness in closing gaps in health inequality. The Commission will make the Final Report public in the last quarter of 2018.

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