

Fighting the Diseases of Poverty



Edited by Philip Stevens

Fighting the Diseases of Poverty

About International Policy Network

International Policy Network (www.policynetwork.net) is a UK-based charity which coordinates policy activities to broaden public understanding of issues relating to sustainable development, health, technology, trade, and economics. To achieve that goal, IPN sponsors events and publications, coordinates activities at international meetings, and promotes greater media awareness of public policy issues.

IPN also works with numerous organisations and individuals in developing countries to enhance their capacity to participate and engage in public policy activities.

About the Campaign for Fighting Diseases

The Campaign for Fighting Diseases (CFD) seeks to raise awareness of the realities of diseases suffered in the poorest regions of the world, and the need for viable solutions for these diseases. Members of the CFD, including academics, NGOs and think tanks, argue for prioritisation of action at local, national and international levels, to ensure that time and money are used most effectively to save lives and achieve the best results with limited resources.

About International Policy Press

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Fighting the Diseases of Poverty

How does economic globalisation affect health? Why is access to medicines in many poor countries so low? Why, despite record levels of spending, are intergovernmental efforts to fight disease so ineffectual? In this book, a collection of experts address these and other questions, showing that:

- Human health has been improving globally since the mid 18th Century and health inequalities between countries – with a few exceptions – are decreasing.
- As a result, the populations of poorer countries are ageing and their burden of disease increasingly resembles that of wealthy countries.
- Despite these significant advances, access to medicines in poor countries remains low – in large part because of a range of counterproductive government policies.
- Intellectual property is blamed by some for restricting access to medicines, yet this is rarely the case; rather, it is a vital incentive for the development of new drugs for the diseases of poverty.
- A lack of enforceable property rights and weak rule of law are contributing to an explosion of counterfeit medicines in less developed countries, to the grave detriment of the health of the poor.
- Government attempts to plan and control universal healthcare systems result in rationing, inequitable access and entrenched corruption.
- Endemic corruption in the health systems of less developed countries undermines the effectiveness of overseas development aid.
- The politicisation of diseases such as HIV/AIDS has led to a diversion of resources away from more easily treatable diseases that affect more people. Cost-effective and simple interventions such as vaccination are being subordinated to other more ‘politically correct’ diseases.
- Meanwhile, the UN’s centrally-planned AIDS and malaria programmes have harmed patients and wasted resources.
- The structure and funding of the World Health Organization leads it to focus resources on the modish health issues of wealthy countries, rather than fighting the diseases of poverty.



www.fightingdiseases.org
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