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FOCUS ON HEALTH IN ALL AREAS APPROACH TO POLICY MAKING

The final lecture in the series “New Policies for a New Era” designed to stimulate debate around health equity issues took place today and focused on the issue of Leadership and Governance for Health. Belfast Healthy Cities, the World Health Organization (WHO) body in Northern Ireland which has organised the lectures accepts that all sectors and levels of government contribute to health creation and that good health benefits everyone.

Among the speakers at Belfast City Hall lecture was Professor Ilona Kickbusch, Director, Global Health Programme, Graduate Institute of International & Development Studies. Professor Kickbusch is an internationally recognised expert on leadership for health and health inequalities and is former ‘thinker in residence’ for the South Australia Government where she assisted policy makers in developing a ‘health in all policies’ approach.

Other speakers at the lecture include Dr Jessica Allen who works with Professor Sir Michael Marmot in the University Of College London (UCL) Institute of Health Equity in England and in WHO Europe. Dr Eddie Rooney, Chief Executive of the Public Health Agency and Dr Andrew McCormick, Permanent Secretary at the Department of Health also made presentations.

Chief Executive of Belfast Healthy Cities Joan Devlin stressed the need for all policies to address health issues.

“There are lessons we can learn from across Europe and around the world where health equity is a priority and the health implications of all policies are taken on board. We are honoured to have Ilona Kickbusch and Jessica Allen with us and their experience has a direct resonance locally. This series of lectures, which began last year has been very fruitful and is an appropriate way to mark the 25th anniversary of Belfast Healthy Cities. Our aim is to improve health equity and wellbeing for people living and working in Belfast and learning from our international partners is an important element of our work.

“The health and wellbeing of the population is best achieved if the whole of government works together to address the social, economic and environmental factors which impact on health. This requires effective leadership throughout society to support better health outcomes”.

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