On February 12, 2014, the International Monetary Fund’s Managing Director Christine Lagarde hosted the chair of the *Lancet Commission on Investing in Health (CIH)*, Lawrence H. Summers, at an event at the IMF. Professor Summers presented [the key messages](http://www.globalhealth2035.org/sites/default/files/policy-briefs/overview-english.pdf) of the CIH’s report [*Global Health 2035: A World Converging within a Generation*](http://www.globalhealth2035.org) *(GH2035)* to an audience of approximately 350 participants, who were primarily from the IMF, but also from the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, USAID and other organizations.

Madame Lagarde’s welcome and opening words framed the key questions to be considered for discussion, namely:

* Can health boost economic growth?
* Can fiscal reform have a profound and positive impact on health?
* What can and should the IMF do about emphasizing investments in health?
* Can impact be achieved in a reasonable amount of time?

Following an overview of [the four key report messages](http://www.globalhealth2035.org/sites/default/files/policy-briefs/overview-english.pdf), Professor Summers delivered specific guidance to the IMF audience:

* That health care investment is not a drain on a country’s budget; investing in health is not where savings should be sought. Instead investments in health care can = an increase in future prosperity (within the context that rationalization is ok and increases in efficiency should be sought). [For an overview of the evidence on the association between health and income see [here](http://www.globalhealth2035.org/sites/default/files/2035/appendix-2.pdf)].
* IMF country advice should take on board health care aspects. For example to increase revenue, policies can emphasize measures to discourage tobacco consumption (via increases in taxation) and fossil fuel consumption (via decreases in subsidies).
* That the IMF should encourage countries to contemplate use of measures such as full income. [For an explanation see [here](http://www.globalhealth2035.org/sites/default/files/2035/appendix-3.pdf)]
* That the IMF should use its influence to recommend increased government funding of global public goods.

Discussions during the Q&A brought the practicalities of report message implementation into focus, summarized in Professor Summers’ words: “Nothing that is truly important will be without controversy”.

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