Delegate: Inara Tanweir

Country: Argentina

Institution: Sri Lankan School Muscat

Topic: Providing medical supplies to regions in need

“Dignity, freedom, and justice for all is only possible with health for all.”

Argentina faced a severe healthcare crisis in the early 2000s, nearly depleting its medical supplies. The United Nations (UN) and its specialized agencies, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), acted to address the global shortage of health supplies. Argentina actively participated in shaping policies and strategies to mitigate supply shortages and enhance healthcare resilience worldwide. Argentina's healthcare system is facing a crisis due to the depletion of funds in its social security program for the elderly, PAMI. The program owes significant debts and has not paid suppliers for up to six months, disrupting the payment system for hospitals, suppliers, and healthcare workers. This affects over four million people, putting immense strain on public and private healthcare institutions. Small healthcare facilities are going bankrupt, and approximately 30% of pharmacies in Buenos Aires may close without adequate funding. The inadequate financial situation has resulted in a 20% increase in heart-related problems and a surge in complaints of insomnia, gastroenteritis, and panic attacks.

To overcome this, a variety of solutions were presented for them. This was the Essential Public Health Functions and Programs Project (FESP I) With the World Bank’s aid, this project aimed to advance public health functions. Key goals included:

I. Increasing coverage of priority programs. Plan Nacer and SUMAR Program expanded coverage for priority programs, providing financing for maternal and child health services, cancer prevention, sexual health services, and more. This program increased healthcare coverage for the uninsured population, specifically children, youth, and women, from 7% to 50.4%.

II. The Integrated Health Information System of Argentina (SIISA) is a centralized platform for collecting, managing, and analyzing health data in Argentina. It improves healthcare data accuracy by integrating information from multiple sources, conducts risk factor surveys, and implements output-based disbursement for 63 public health activities. This method links funding to specific health outcomes, such as tobacco control, infectious disease control, maternal and child health, and improving quality standards across the region.

Measures that Argentina could take in the future to prevent such a crisis from occurring again would be to be prepared for said “crisis”. This would mean to be prepaed for any incoming pandemics, such as COVID-19 where due to being unprepared and having no pre plans, the country had suffered. Or problems that can put people’s health at risk and put them on the border of scarce healthcare resources, such as in the early 2000’s. Argentina must be prepared for all potential healthcare crises. This would mean having an early warning system, proper vaccine and medical development, and highly developed laboratories for early and accurate diagnosis of potentially risky diseases.

By implementing these measures, Argentina can construct a strong and sustainable healthcare system, readily available for their populations needs.

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