The Global Health Debate: Right or Commodity

By ADAM PARSONS

With controversy still raging over national health reforms in the United States, the media is paying little attention to an international debate on global health policy that is of major importance to the world’s poorest people. Both debates revolve around a similar theme: that President Barack Obama, who is now the leader of the world’s largest economy, has made health care reform the top priority on the agenda of the international community. This is the most laudable and important debate to which President Obama has turned his attention, and it is one that has been fittingly placed in the United States. In 2008, the United States is framed by the optimism surrounding the election of Barack Obama, who is now a candidate for the Democratic Party. Obama’s vision of a new international framework, a PHC strategy that is today gaining recognition among policymakers, health professionals, civil society, and the United Nations.

While the healthcare discussion in the United States is fueled by the universal coverage of all Americans, the debate on PHC has long been guided by the World Health Organization (WHO), and its member states. On the agenda of the international community, a PHC strategy is still far from implementation. Although the WHO is no longer challenged, it remains the voice of a new international agenda.

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The PHC debate is one of the most important issues facing the world today. The costs of the world’s health systems have been rising rapidly, and the pressures on government budgets and introduced user fees are increasing. As a result, global poverty levels in the world’s poorest countries have risen to unprecedented levels. As the neoliberal discourse predominant in the world’s wealthy countries is framed by the optimistic belief in the ability of market solutions to provide universal health coverage, the United States is framed by the optimism surrounding the election of Barack Obama, who is now a candidate for the Democratic Party. Obama’s vision of a new international framework, a PHC strategy that is today gaining recognition among policymakers, health professionals, civil society, and the United Nations.