Dear Director-General Tedros,

Congratulations on your appointment as the next Director-General of the World Health Organization. As leaders at ministries and departments of health, NGOs, universities and colleges, international institutions and health partnerships, and elsewhere, we are committed to the unqualified success of your tenure at WHO for global public health and for the right to health. We have great hopes for the possibilities of your leadership in helping to realize the right of everyone to the highest attainable standard of health, and offer you our best wishes for your success.

We urge you to display this leadership and respond to persisting unconscionable health inequities around the world by actively supporting and advancing a treaty based in the right to health and aimed at closing these inequities, the proposed Framework Convention on Global Health (FCGH). It is time for WHO to put its most powerful normative tool, a legally binding treaty, towards its overriding constitutional principle of the right to health, creating powerful norms and meaningful accountability.

You stated upon your appointment to be Director-General that “all roads lead to universal health coverage.” The FCGH is one such road. Its proposed framework on health financing would help secure sufficient, sustained funds for robust universal health coverage. Yet we know that sufficient funding alone is insufficient to achieve universal health coverage if health systems and policies are not genuinely accountable to the people whom they are meant to serve. Without this accountability, universal health coverage will remain only an aspiration, divorced from reality. A chief objective of the FCGH will be to enhance accountability at all levels.

Universal health coverage demands respect for the rights of all people, including the most vulnerable and marginalized. So does the FCGH, envisioned to incorporate a host of strategies to empower and protect the health rights of women, migrants, and all marginalized people, and to ensure their participation in health-related decision-making. We are heartened by the priority you have always expressed for the poorest and most marginalized among us. Equality and empowering those who are disadvantaged is the heart of the FCGH.

Finally, universal health coverage can provide only so much health if policies outside the health sector do not respect and, as relevant, seek to advance the right to health. Addressing these broader determinants of health is also a central feature of the FCGH.

We are providing a short briefing paper on the FCGH with more information. And early in your tenure, you will be receiving a letter signed by numerous organizations and concerned individuals around the world that offers further details on how the FCGH is connected to priorities you have expressed during the past year, and have worked to advance throughout your
career. We thank you in advance for listening to, and we hope acting upon, their message to WHO – and to you as its new leader.

As you chart your early priorities and actions as Director-General, we earnestly hope that you will include the FCGH among them, and take the steps now and in the coming years needed to bring the FCGH into existence. As you have stressed time and again, health is a human rights issue. The FCGH can help solidify a consensus among countries that they will, as you might say, walk our talk on the right to health, so that all countries, each in its own way and supported through a network of global solidarity and sharing common principles, can enable all of their people to realize their rights.

Thank you, and we look forward to further discussing the FCGH with you.

Sincerely,

Oladapo Awosokanre *
Executive Director, Africa Development and Advocacy Centre (United Kingdom)

Donna Barry *
Executive Director, Global Oncology (United States)

Adam Bertscher *
University of Cape Town, South Africa

Paulo Buss *
Director, FIOCRUZ Center for Global Health; Former Brazilian representative to the WHO Executive Board (2004-2007, 2008-2011); Former president of FIOCRUZ (2001-2008) (Brazil); Former president of the World Federation of Public Health Associations (2008-2010)

Mushtaque Chowdhury *
Vice Chairperson and former interim Executive Director, BRAC; Founding Dean James P. Grant School of Public Health, BRAC University, Bangladesh

Yoswa Dambisya *
Director-General, East, Central and Southern Africa (ECSA) Health; Formerly Senior Professor, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Limpopo, South Africa (2003-2014)

Lola Dare
President, CHESTRAD International; Global Director, I Will Give, Africa

Armando De Negri *
Coordinator, Executive Committee of the World Social Forum on Health and Social Security; General Coordinator of the Brazilian Network of Cooperation on Emergencies; Former General Coordinator of Asociacion Latinoamericana de Medicina Social (Latin American Social Medicine Association)
Ezekwesiri Eluchie *
Executive Director, People Against Drug Dependence and Ignorance (Nigeria); Sub-Saharan Africa Representative, Civil Society Task Force, UN General Assembly Special Session on Drug Policy (2016)

Eric A. Friedman *
Project Leader, Platform for an FCGH, O’Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law, Georgetown University Law Center, United States

Case Gordon *
Co-coordinator, IMAXI Cooperative

Lawrence O. Gostin *
Faculty Director, O’Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law, Georgetown University Law Center; University Professor, Georgetown University, United States

Anand Grover
Senior Advocate and Executive Director, Lawyers Collective (India); Former UN Special Rapporteur for the right to health (2008-2014)

Martin Hevia *
Dean, School of Law, Universidad Tortcuato di Tella (Argentina); Vice President, Ibero-American Association of Faculties and Schools of Law

Joan Holloway
Human resources for health consultant; Steering Committee member and Former Acting Director, Frontline Health Workers Coalition; Former Senior Advisor, Human Resources for Health and Health Systems Strengthening, Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator, U.S. Department of State

Bernard Kadasia *
Chair, Alliance for Health Promotion

Churnrurtai Kanchanachitra
Professor and former Director, Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University, Thailand

Runa Khan *
Founder and Executive Director, Friendship (Bangladesh)

Gabriel Leung
Dean and Chair of the Division of Community Medicine and Public Health Practice, Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine, University of Hong Kong

Christian Locke *
President, Action for Humane Hospitals (Cameroon); Member, International Alliance of Patients Organizations
Precious Matsoso  
Director-General, Department of Health, South Africa

Celina Menezes  
Co-coordinator, IMAXI Cooperative

Sigrun Mogedal  
Vice Chair, Save the Children Norway; Special Advisor, Norwegian Public Health Institute, Oslo, Norway; Chair, Medicines Patent Pool; Chair, Robert Carr Civil Society Network Fund; Former Member, Independent Monitoring Board, Global Polio Eradication Initiative; Former Chair, Global Health Workforce Alliance (2006-2010); Former HIV/AIDS and Global Health Initiatives Ambassador, Norway (2005-2011); Former Board member, Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; Former Board member, GAVI; Former Board member, UNITAID; Former Deputy Minister (State Secretary), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway (2000-2001); Former Senior Policy Adviser to the Executive Director of UNAIDS

Joia Mukherjee  
Chief Medical Officer, Partners In Health; Associate Professor of Medicine, Division of Global Health Equity, Department of Medicine, Brigham and Women’s Hospital (United States); Associate Professor of Global Health and Social Medicine, Harvard Medical School, United States

Moses Mulumba *  
Executive Director, Center for Health, Human Rights and Development (Uganda)

Gorik Ooms *  
Professor of Global Health Law and Governance, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, United Kingdom

Indira Paharia *  
Chief Practice and Performance Officer, Hillside Family of Agencies (United States)

Joy Phumaphi  
Executive Secretary, African Leaders Malaria Alliance; Chairperson, African Comprehensive HIV/AIDS Partnerships; Former Vice President for Human Development and Head of Human Development Network, World Bank (2007-2009); Former WHO Assistant Director-General for Family and Community Health and WHO Director-General’s Representative on Gender Equality (2003-2007); Former Minister of Health of Botswana (1999-2003); Member of Parliament, Botswana (1994-2003); Former Board member, GAVI; Former Co-chair, Independent Expert Review Group, for Every Woman Every Child; Former member of the UN Reference Group on Economics; Former UN Commissioner on HIV/AIDS and Governance

Leslie Ramsammy  
Columnist at Guyana Times; Former Minister of Health, Guyana (2001-2011); Former Minister of Agriculture, Guyana (2011-2015); Former President of the World Health Assembly (61st WHA, 2008)
K. Srinath Reddy *
President, Public Health Foundation of India; Former President of the World Heart Federation (2013-2014)

Mark Rosenberg
President Emeritus, The Task Force for Global Health; Assistant Surgeon General (Retired), US Public Health Service

Mirta Roses Periago
National Academy of Medicine, Buenos Aires, Argentina; Neglected Tropical Diseases Special Envoy, Sabin Vaccine Institute; PAHO/WHO AMRO Director Emeritus; Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, LAC Board Member

Itai Rusike *
Executive Director, Community Working Group for Health (Zimbabwe)

Phenyo Sebonego *
Chief Public Health Officer, Alcohol and Substance Abuse Division, Department of Public Health, Ministry of Health and Wellness, Botswana [in private capacity]

Nelson K. Sewankambo
Professor of Medicine and Principal (Head) of Makerere University College of Health Sciences; Chair, Strengthening Research Capacity in Africa; Director; Medical Education for Equitable Services for All Ugandans (MESAU) - MEPI Consortium; Chair, African Medical Schools Association; Former Dean, Makerere University Medical School (1997-2007)

Joe Thomas *
Executive Director, Partners in Population and Development

Oyewale Tomori
President, Nigerian Academy of Science; Professor of Virology and former Vice Chancellor (2005-2011), Redeemer’s University, Nigeria

Miriam Were *
Chancellor, Moi University, Kenya; Former Chair, AMREF (2003-2013); Former Chair, National AIDS Control Council, Kenya (2003-2009)

Debrework Zewdie *
Distinguished Scholar at the CUNY School of Public Health and Public Policy, United States; Former Director, Global AIDS Program, World Bank (2002-2009); Former Deputy Executive Director (2010-2012) and Deputy General Manger (2012-2013) of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

* Member of the FCGH Platform Steering Committee or Advisory Board, or FCGH Alliance Prospective Executive Committee