



June 23, 2017

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,

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