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A Treaty on Health Equity and Health Rights: For the SDGs and the Future
Statement to the UN Summit of the Future, 2024

Health equity is the most telling metric of progress on the 2030 Agenda, and a key driver of its success. Virtually all SDGs impact health equity, while actions aimed at reducing health equity gaps will accelerate progress throughout the 2030 Agenda. Yet the world is vastly off track to achieve its health targets. As COVID-19 made plain, the world is facing a pandemic of health inequity.

COVID-19 reawakened global leaders to the role of health treaties. As a treaty on pandemics is being finalised, civil society organisations are proposing an additional treaty grounded in human rights and aimed at achieving national and global health equity, known as the Framework Convention on Global Health.

In advancing health equity, such a treaty would not only advance progress on the SDGs, but would also strengthen the governance framework for realising the rights and dignity of current and future generations. The treaty's power would come from the specific standards and mechanisms it cultivates. It would catalyse the regular use of health impact assessments to ensure policies across the determinants of health are consistent with human rights, and establish standards to ensure meaningful and inclusive participation in health-related policy decision-making.

Today, from unequal access to quality healthcare to conditions for ill-health that entrench poverty, the drivers of health inequity are self-reinforcing, causing health inequities to ripple through the generations. A treaty on health equity and health rights could create a new dynamic, where transparent, participatory and accountable systems for health and sustainable health financing lead to greater health equity for all.

As we approach the world's 2030 SDG deadline, we urge Heads of State and Government to establish a process for initiating negotiations on a global treaty grounded in human rights and aimed at advancing national and global health equity for current and future generations.