

Health for All: Justice for All

A Global Campaign for a Framework Convention on Global Health

- ❖ Vast inequalities in health between richer and poorer countries and within countries result in nearly 20 million avoidable deaths every year— and have for the past two decades. This represents 1 in every 3 deaths in the world. This social injustice is an assault on our values and shared humanity.
- ❖ These deaths are not sterile statistics. They are human lives extinguished. They are the anguish of a woman who dies in childbirth and her family's grief, the pain of the sick child who suffers before dying young, the daily risks of the worker with no protection in the workplace, the constant struggle of the family without a toilet, running water, or enough food. And for millions, the cost of a life-saving surgery or medication may be a lifetime of poverty and debt.
- ❖ *We insist on Health for All and Justice for All.* We affirm that everyone has the right to the highest standard of physical and mental health. Achieving this human right demands committed governments, a powerful civil society, universal social protection, solidarity among people all over the world, and resources that exist but are denied to the poor.

*The world fails nearly 20 million people every year, and fails billions more people whose lives are shattered by want and deprivation. To address at least a part of this injustice, we are launching a global campaign grounded in the human right to health, where governments assure the conditions in which everyone can be healthy. Recognizing the strength of existing international law, yet how hard it is to utilize by the people who most need to assert their rights, we are calling for a **Framework Convention on Global Health** to give true force to international law and extend its reach into the communities where we live, to create the conditions for health and wellbeing for everyone.*

1. The highest attainable standard of health can be fulfilled only through the realization of all human rights, gender justice, universal systems of social protection, and a fair economic system serving the needs of the people. Yet we can make great progress for health justice even as we continue to demand these broader aspirations.
2. The claim that the level of health in wealthy countries cannot be achieved in poorer countries is utterly wrong. We were once told that poor countries could not afford HIV treatment. But global mobilization has yielded once unimaginable progress, even as the struggle remains unfinished. Successful national policies directed towards the right to health have further demonstrated that health justice is realizable.
3. We call for global health justice, where the level of a person's health is not linked to the level of her wealth, where equity and empowerment underpin health systems, where policies aspire towards health equality, with special attention devoted to people at society's margins.

4. We call for global social justice, so that a person's life chances are not determined by the happenstance of her birth, and health is treated as a human right and global common good. It is not, and should not be treated as, a commodity to be bought and sold. We call for high quality universal health systems for all, not one system for the poor and one for the rich.

Seize the Time: This is a Historic Moment for a Global Movement for Health Justice

5. Today we have the opportunity to overturn the status quo and transform it, from a world that too often denies people their rights to one genuinely committed to realizing them.

a. Developing the post-2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) agenda is a top United Nations priority. We must place health and human rights at the centre of this agenda.

b. The World Health Organization is spearheading a global movement towards universal health coverage. Let us define and codify this obligation.

c. Civil society is uniting around the right to health. Let us foster a global social movement around this right as a first step towards comprehensive social protection systems.

d. The world is being swept by demands for dignity and equality that are radiating from streets and squares across the globe. Let us rally for health justice.

e. We are learning the extent of untapped resources, from financial transactions to weak tax systems, and the criminal use of tax havens and illicit capital flows that deny countries fiscal resources. Let us direct some of these resources to health.

6. We do not accept that an economic downturn should lead to austerity budgets that threaten health nationally and globally. We call for political leadership that recognizes the duty to respect, protect, and fulfil the right to health.

Toward a Framework Convention on Global Health (FCGH)

7. All governments have endorsed human rights including the right to health in national constitutions or international law. Yet governments fail to abide by their obligations. We need an international treaty that reinforces and enforces the right to health, builds capacities to realize it, sets up systems to monitor progress, and holds governments accountable. People everywhere need knowledge and support to claim their rights. *An FCGH can transform people's health and wellbeing by empowering people everywhere to claim their rights.*

8. Threats to health abound: climate change, food insecurity, water shortages, unaffordable medicines and vaccines, and under-regulated transnational corporations and international trade. Rules on trade, finance, migration, and agriculture often threaten people's health. *An FCGH can define international obligations to health in all spheres of activity. It can advance the right to health as foundational to a universal system of social protection.*

9. The global health architecture is deeply flawed. Health investment is inadequate and volatile; public health needs such as sanitation, clean water, and nutritious food are under-

prioritized; accountability is weak; and coordination among international and national partners deficient. *An FCGH can create a framework for more effective global health structures and processes, ones that place the needs and demands of communities above powerful economic and political interests.*

Key Principles of a Framework Convention on Global Health

10. Building on international treaties, national constitutions, and civil society proclamations such as the People's Health Charter and the declaration from the World Social Forum on Health and Social Security, and in the spirit of global solidarity, an FCGH should:

- a. Set high standards for universal health coverage, specifying the services and goods that should be guaranteed to every person under the right to health, including health systems that provide quality health care across the full continuum of care, that encompass public health services, and that address the determinants of health. These standards should be adapted to local communities through participatory, equitable processes that promote social justice.
- b. Ensure the availability of sufficient national and international resources for health, including fair, progressive, effective, and transparent taxation through improved tax systems and innovative forms of tax, such as on financial transactions, tobacco products, alcohol, unhealthy foods, and environmentally damaging processes.
- c. Define state responsibilities for the health of all its inhabitants, regardless of nationality, gender, race, sexual orientation, immigration, disability, or other status; to promote equity; to ensure equal access to quality health services, especially for the most marginalized in society; and to extend social health protection and ensure that no one is impoverished by health spending.
- d. Empower people to claim and enforce the right to health; build capacities at all levels to realize this right; ensure accountability and enforceability, locally, nationally, and internationally; and facilitate civil society and communities in holding their own governments to account.
- e. Ensure accountability of officials and protect resources for health through transparency and combating corruption, illicit financial transfers and tax havens, and the misuse of public resources.
- f. Define the responsibilities of states to the health of people beyond their borders, including through pooling and allocating sustainable resources to health; ensuring adequate investment in research and development; and not harming the health of people in other countries (for example, as a result of pollution and climate change).
- g. Ensure healthy workplaces and regulate unhealthy products and practices of private actors that undermine health or place health services or goods beyond people's reach.

h. Promote health-in-all policies and regulate the social determinants of health, including by ensuring that all government ministries and international regimes, such as the World Trade Organization and International Monetary Fund, protect and promote the right to health.

i. Improve international partner harmonization and alignment with national health strategies, ensure country ownership, and guarantee mutual accountability.

j. Ensure the immediate and effective enforceability of the right to health in all states, including by building legal, technical, civil society, and other capacity; creating greater precision about the right's requirements; and codifying its principles.

11. We are steadfast that the FCGH must ensure accountability of all actors – state and non-state, local, national, and international. It should include timelines, benchmarks, and targets; rigorous reporting, monitoring, and evaluation; community participation in treaty monitoring; effective incentives and sanctions; and full compliance.

The Path Towards a Framework Convention on Global Health

12. The FCGH must be central to the international agreement that follows the MDGs.

13. All countries should ratify, incorporate into domestic law, and apply and enforce existing human rights and health treaties, and support effective, health-promoting international law, such as forceful measures for the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change, and sufficient flexibilities in intellectual property protection.

14. Above all, the path towards an FCGH begins with communities, civil society, and all those committed to health and dignity for all. It begins with us. We call for people everywhere to take actions that insist that the right to health is immediately claimable and enforceable, that it is universally implemented, and that people understand this right and empowered to claim it.

We invite all those committed to health justice to join us in a Global Campaign for an FCGH to construct a treaty that meets the needs of communities while dismantling the barriers to health justice, to generate the political will to adopt and implement an FCGH, and to hold governments – and all those with obligations for health justice – accountable to their commitments – those they have already made, and those contained in an FCGH. We are dedicated to work together to capture the historic opportunity for change that is now before us. We will continue to organize and campaign for as long as it takes to achieve the highest standard of physical and mental health for all. The health of the world depends upon it.

Please sign this Manifesto through JALI's website, <http://www.jalihealth.org>. If you are having difficulties, or have any questions, please contact the JALI Secretariat (info@jalihealth.org). Thank you.