Civil society and communities statement on High-Level Meeting logistics & proceedings

The undersigned organizations release the following statement noting concern over the proceedings of the UN Multistakeholder Hearings and subsequent process for drafting and adopting UN Declarations at the three health-related High-Level Meetings (HLMs) this year, particularly the High-Level Meeting on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness, and Response (PPPR).

There have been several opportunities for organizers and decision-makers to open up the process and engage a broader set of relevant stakeholders, as has become standard for health-related UN HLMs, that have not been taken. Firstly, since there is no designated civil society engagement mechanism in place for the PPPR HLM, civil society was not able to feed meaningfully into the Multistakeholder Hearing panel speakers or topics as we were in previous HLMs and as formally designated mechanisms for the UHC and TB processes were. There was a lack of clarity behind the reasoning for the decisions made on which speakers were selected and what topics they were meant to represent.

Secondly, the timing and logistics of the UN Multistakeholder Hearings have resulted in much lower engagement than civil society and communities have come to expect. Whereas in previous health-related HLMs a two- or three-day hearing has been held to ensure a broad range of stakeholders are able to provide input ahead of the drafting process, the three hearings are each limited to half a day. This left very little time for panelists to deliver interventions (and zero time for an actual panel dialogue) or for representatives to give statements from the floor. While we appreciated the strict timing and commitment to consider written inputs in order to accommodate as many statements as possible, the limitations do impact our ability to advocate and provide weak accountability mechanisms. In addition, the timing of the registration process severely limited the participation of civil society and community representatives from countries that require a visa to the US - with less than a month to acquire a visa, the rooms were filled with only those with existing long-term visas or those from countries with reciprocity agreements.

These developments have led to a great deal of concern among civil society and communities as to how the drafting process will take our priorities into account. In order to rectify these missteps, we suggest the UN President of the General Assembly’s office, WHO, and the HLM co-facilitators (The Permanent Missions of Guyana, Israel, Morocco, Poland, Thailand, and Uzbekistan) undertake the following:

1. As soon as possible, schedule a virtual hearing for each HLM topic with Member State representatives so that the purpose of the Multistakeholder Hearings, for Member States to hear civil society priorities and incorporate them, can be fully realized.
2. As there is no formal civil society and communities engagement mechanism for the PPPR HLM, and as the breadth of stakeholders is so wide due to the subject matter, hold a virtual briefing at each stage of the drafting process (after each reading) to update stakeholders on the proceedings and timelines and provide a platform for input as changes are made to the draft Declaration.
3. Solicit comprehensive civil society and communities input in the process of developing the agenda, topics, and speakers for the HLMs in September.

We look to WHO, the UN President of the General Assembly, the co-facilitators, and Member States to ensure that, as civic space recedes across the world, multilateral processes protect civil society inclusion and recognize the expertise, strength, and implementation support that civil society bring to these global agreements. We are very open to continued consultations on how the infrastructure to support and engage civil society can be strengthened.

We thank you for your consideration of these asks.

Signed:
Advocacy Network Africa (AdNetA)
Africa Civil Society Platform for Health (CiSPHA)
Africa Queer Network
Afrihealth Optonet Association (AHOA)
Aide Internationale pour le Développement Durable (AIDD)
Alliance Burundaise pour la lutte contre la Tuberculose et la Lèpre et les maladies (ABTL)
Americas TB Coalition
Amoru AIDS Support Community Initiative
Association For Promotion Sustainable Development
AVAC
Blossom Trust
Coalition of Women Living with HIV and AIDS
COBCUS
CODEPHA
COEL - Women Elders and Innovation
Community And Family Aid Foundation Ghana
CSYM HUDUMA
Disability Peoples Forum Uganda
Dr Uzo Adirieje Foundation (DUZAFOUND)
ECD
Equal Health and Rights Access Advocacy Initiative (EHRAAI)
Friends of the Global Fight
Frontline AIDS
Fundamental Human Rights & Rural Development Association (FHRRDA)
Global Fund Advocates Network (GFAN)
GNP+
Good Health Community Programmes
Grupo de apoyo Este Amor
HEADP Nepal
HEED Bangladesh
Heritage Life Support Initiative
IAVI
ICASO
India Working Group For Health Advocacy
Indonesian Harm Reduction Network
Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA)
Innovations for Development
Institute of Allergy and Clinical Immunology of Bangladesh (IACIB)
International Treatment Preparedness Coalition (ITPC)
Joyful Hope Resource Platform Centre (JHRPC)
KHANA Cambodia
Kubrosha-Africa Limited
Lawyers Alert
Lesotho Network of AIDS Service Organizations
Mbuenet Mtandao Coalitions East Africa
MBUNGONET
Medecins Sans Frontieres/Doctors Without Borders
MOPHA
Most At Risk Populations’ Society in Uganda (MARPS in Uganda)
Movement of Men Against AIDS in Kenya (MMAAK)
Myanmar Positive Christian Group
Myanmar Youth Foundation for SDGs
Network of TB Champions Kenya
North West Provincial Council on AIDS
Occupational Knowledge International
Pamoja TB Group
Paneer HIV Positive Women Network Trust
Paropakar Primary Health Care Centre PPUK
Positive Women Together in Action
Quest Bangladesh
Rainbow TB Forum
Rekat Peduli Indonesia
Results Canada
Results International (Australia)
Results UK
SAF-TESO
Saglamliga Khidmat Public Union
Society for Conservation and Sustainability of Energy and Environment in Nigeria (SOCSEEN)
STOP AIDS
Stop TB Canada
Sustainable World Initiative for All (SUWOFA)
Tanzania TB Community Network
TB Champions Association of Botswana
TB Women Global
The Reformed Drug and Substance Abuse Initiative
University for Development Studies
Women Against AIDS and Poverty (WAA&P)
WACI Health
We Are TB
Women4GlobalFund (W4GF)
Women Together Edu-cultural Center, Kenya
Women Voices
Wote Youth Development Projects
Youth Centre for Global Health and Research