

Towards the Right to Health: Possibilities of a Framework Convention on Global Health and Harmonized Civil Society Platforms for Universal Health Coverage

Wednesday, May 25, 2016

6:00 – 7:30 pm

Palais, Salle IX

Organized by the Global Health Council, World Vision International, International Planned Parenthood Federation, Save the Children Fund, World Heart Federation, Alliance for Health Promotion, and Framework Convention on Global Health Steering Committee

“I further encourage the international community to consider and recognize the value of a comprehensive Framework Convention on Global Health.” – UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, *On the Fast-Track to Ending the AIDS Epidemic: Report of the Secretary-General* (April 2016)

Universal health coverage (UHC), global health security, health equity, the right to health – the world’s health needs and promises remain at great odds with reality, with devastating consequences for individuals, local communities, countries, and the global community itself – with more than one in three deaths globally attributed to health inequities and its drivers.¹ The Sustainable Development Goals promise that no one will be left behind, but how to institutionalize change so that the human rights – and humanity – of the most marginalized are fully respected? A first step is the presence of the UHC target within the Goals, which mandates the extension of access and services to all, and provides the basis for monitoring progress towards full coverage. Achieving UHC would strongly contribute to providing access to health for the most marginalized and vulnerable groups of populations worldwide.

Going further is the Framework Convention on Global Health (FCGH), which would be based on human rights and aimed at achieving and enshrining the concept of health equity. The FCGH would offer a structured approach to sustained, universal, rights-based individual and global health security by establishing standards and a financing framework for UHC and health systems strengthening. It would promote respect for health and human rights in all international regimes, such as trade and intellectual property. Further, it would contribute to integrated, people-centered health systems by enabling accountability, meaningful participation, and equity.

As the FCGH gains momentum, civil society organizations are mobilizing for the right to health and UHC. Experiences across countries are demonstrating the added value and challenges of civil society platforms to harmonize action and garner political commitment towards rights-based universal health coverage, where all people receive access to comprehensive health

¹ Juan Garay, *Health Equity: The Key for Transformational Change*. San José, Costa Rica: Editorial Nacional de Salud y Seguridad Social; 2015.

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/bd0k0ey7u95koka/Dualbook%20EQUIDAD%20EN%20SALUD%20CCSS%20Ingl%C3%A9s%20WEB.pdf?dl=0>.

services, and no one is left behind. From mobilizing greater domestic and international investment to enhancing people's participation, these platforms can accelerate progress on UHC – and realizing the right to health – today.

What challenges do these platforms face, and how to overcome them? How might the FCGH empower civil society platforms and contribute to UHC? Beyond UHC, what is the value of and need for the FCGH? How can the FCGH and UHC best meet the needs and concerns of states and civil society to maximize effectiveness and achieve goals? And where do we go from here?

This side event will introduce participants to these two strategies towards health equity – the FCGH to institutionalize the right to health throughout national and global governance, and civil society platforms to better implement UHC as a key approach to the right to health – and the synergies between them. We will present analysis and experiences that speak to these concepts at both a national level – including case studies – and at the individual level, highlighting the health inequities that the FCGH and UHC-related civil society platforms will help overcome. We will share how in each of people's different realities, more effective UHC advocacy and the FCGH could be transformative.

A substantial portion of the session will be set aside for feedback and discussion. We hope that this event is part of an extended dialogue towards advancing the right to health, on ensuring empowered civil society platforms for UHC, and on generating support for and understanding of – and beginning a formal process towards – the FCGH.