

An Open Letter to Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of the UN's World Health Organization

We the undersigned civil society organisations and community groups working on health related issues in Kenya wish to thank you for showing interest and commitment in working and regularly engaging with civil society and communities. Some of the undersigned individuals and organisations were part of your [informal consultation meeting with civil society participants at the WHO Global Ministerial Conference on Ending TB, on 16 November 2017](#) in Moscow, Russia where you committed to engaging with civil society representatives for the TB UN High Level Meeting 2018 and beyond including advocating for universal health coverage.

We are aware that on 10 January 2018, you visited Kenya and held several consultations, including with the Cabinet Secretary in charge of Health, Ministry of Health and the President of Kenya.

We are however deeply concerned that in this particular visit, you did not schedule any consultations with civil societies, communities and other non-state actors working in the health sector. Universal Health Coverage (UHC), which you discussed, cannot be achieved by the government alone. As agents on the ground, civil societies and communities play an equally crucial role. Moreover, engaging them during this visit, would have presented an equally great opportunity to deliberate on the upcoming UN High Level Meeting on TB.

We highly encourage you to engage with civil society and communities in future country visits, and call upon the WHO country offices to play a more proactive role in securing meetings with key stakeholders. Broader public involvement in health care remains desirable in the achievement of universal health coverage as it will lead to more democratic decision making and, in turn, better accountability. It is important that you adhere to your commitments towards deliberate, purposeful and broader engagement and involvement of civil society and communities in order to overcome the existing shortcomings in the health sector and achieve the set global public health goals.

We look forward to an inclusive engagement of stakeholders to enrich your conversations on health care in Kenya.

Endorsed by the following organisations:

Bar Hostess Empowerment & Support Programme (BHESP)

Center for Reproductive Rights

Coalition on Violence Against Women (COVAW)

Coast Hostess Empowering Community (CHEC)

Coast Sex Workers Alliance

Global TB Caucus

Health Rights Advocacy Forum (HERAF)

International Community of Women Living with HIV (ICW)

Kenya Legal and Ethical Issues Network on HIV and AIDS (KELIN)

Kenya NGO Alliance Against Malaria

Kenya Treatment Access Movement (KETAM)

National Empowerment Network of People living with HIV/AIDS in Kenya (NEPHAK)

Pamoja TB Group

Reproductive Health Network

Stop TB Partnership (Kenya)

Endorsed by the following individuals:

Caren Omanga

Christine Ajulu

Clara Akinyi

Damaris Onyango

Dr. C. Odula

Eric Okioma

Esther Nelima

James Kamau

Khairunisa Suleiman

Maurine Murenga

Peter Owiti

Rebecca Awiti

Violet Mavisi

Victor Kariuki