

Message from Dr Tewabech Bishaw, President of the Ethiopian Public Health Association

Dear participant of the 13th World Congress; please forgive us if we display mixed feelings of nervousness, surprise and sincere gratefulness. This is the biggest event of its kind wherein we are hosting the decisive and principal actors of the world's public health industry. We are thus very much humbled to host the 13th World Congress on Public Health and to welcome you to the capital city of our nation. This is, after all, only the second time the congress is being held in Africa; after Tanzania in 1997.

It goes without saying that we would not be able to accomplish all of these alone. Our partners have been providing us with technical and financial support building up our morale throughout the months leading up to this day. WFPHA has worked with us as a co-organizer of the congress, and so have WHO and the Ethiopian Federal Ministry of Health.

In these times of heightened awakening about democratic equity, human rights and justice, the theme of the 13th Congress – Towards Global Health Equity: Opportunities and Threats – is one we are very glad of and welcome.

Following deliberations and discussions that would ensue in the following few days, the congress is going to come up with a declaration of the consensus reached at by the participants.

The recommendations and suggestions arising from scientific research findings, experience sharing and lessons obtained and communicated from the platform of the congress, will define the crucial issues, inform our approach, and direct our future activities.

Ultimately, the consensus reached here that is to be designated 'The Addis Ababa Declaration' would be tabled for subsequent pursuit by all of us. We are confident that with the re-enforcement of our commitment, we can jointly forge ahead in partnership with the public and private sectors, coupled with sustained



Dr. Tewabech Bishaw President of EPHA

active participation of communities with their indigenous knowledge and traditional wisdom. When the above are in concert with national, regional and international professional associations, there would be a strengthening of north-south and south-south collaborative networking to work for and bring about health development thereby improving the quality of life for all.



13th World Congress on Public Health

April 23-27 2012 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



**“Towards Global Health Equity:
Opportunities and Threats”**



Message from Ato Hailegnaw Eshete, Executive Director of the Ethiopian Public Health Association

Health professionals and development experts from around the world gather somewhere every three years to share ideas, experiences and research outputs among themselves. This year, it has fortunately become Ethiopia's turn to serve as the venue for this extraordinary event. This is, indeed, a historic occasion and a time for Ethiopia's health sector to turn a page, as it demands of us to set our perspective on the contemporary global dimensions of health matters using the theme and issues of the 13th Congress.

The congress is being held only for the second time in Africa subsequent to Tanzania's hosting in 1997. Organizing the congress and making all the preparations for it has made it necessary for us to evaluate our resources and test our capacity since it is an unprecedented event for us. We do hope we have lived up to it at least in meeting the essential requirements.

As you all know and expect, the congress will take up almost all relevant issues of public health. That does not, of course, mean it has no focus and a particular theme; it indeed does and a timely one at that. Given the new and emerging awakening for democracy, human rights and economic justice; the theme - Towards Global Health Equity: Opportunities and Threats, is becoming of the time.

We are to conclude our deliberations and discussions with a declaration of our consensus regarding the main theme that will be presented to WHO at its World Health Assembly meeting. The Ethiopian Public Health Association feels specially privileged to have jointly organized it with WFPHA. The Ethiopian government too which has been involved and working with us, through its Ministry of Health appreciates and is pleased to have the congress take place in Addis Ababa.

Finally, I would like to thank all those who submitted abstracts, partnered with us in providing technical and financial support, as well as both the local and international participants for your interest and committed in taking your time to share your experiences at the 13th World Congress through your contributions.



Ato Hailegnaw Eshete (MS, MPH)
Executive Director of EPHA

Let me also take this opportunity to sincerely acknowledge and appreciate the Ethiopian Federal Ministry of Health and WFPHA for their continued support to EPHA in organizing this congress.

And finally, I would like to invite all international participants to discover and explore the quite fascinating, natural, historical and cultural attractions of Ethiopia with as many as eight UNESCO world heritage sites.



EPHA Current Premise



Media Orientation on the 13th World Congress on Public Health Urged the Media to take Ownership on Issues of Health Equity

On February 23rd, a Media Orientation was held to introduce and provide major highlights to local and international editors and reporters on the 13th World Congress on Public Health, which is going to be held in Addis Ababa from April 23 to 27 under the theme “Towards Global Health Equity: Opportunities and Threats”. On the occasion, Dr. Tedros Adhanom, Minister of Health called upon the media, government and non government organizations for their continuous support and active engagement for the successful realization of the 13th World Congress on Public Health.

African country to host this important international congress on public health. This Congress is an opportunity to showcase Ethiopia's successes as a low income country in making progress to improve public health in the country. Hence, media's role to bring these issues to light and put forward plans of actions within the public is invaluable. He added “it will also provide opportunity to show our positive image of ancient civilization, history, diversified traditions and cultures and abundant natural resources and diverse ecology.”

Ato Motuma Temesgen, representing the State Minister of Government Communication Office, expressed his Office's commitment to play a crucial role in educating the public about issues pertaining to the Congress, bringing forth issues of public health equity to various segments of the population and creating a conducive environment not only for discussion but for solution provision.

“The media should play a major role in involving the public in the process, but more importantly in empowering people to be part of the solution in the movement that leads to social and thereby health equity; especially



Dr Tedros Adhanom, Minister of Health of Ethiopia

by reaching out to those who are marginalized and disadvantaged”, Ato Motuma remarked. The Millennium Hall will host the 13th World Congress on Public Health and is expected to be an exceptional event that set the bar for other hosts to follow.

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Planning and Preparation to Host the 13th World Congress on Public Health Builds Momentum

Speaking at the media orientation program on Thursday February 23rd, Dr. Tewabech told journalists that planning and preparations are well under way for the world congress that will bring together 3000 national and international health professionals, leaders, advocates from all over the world.

Dr. Tewabech President of EPHA and Co-chair person of the 13th World Congress said, “the organizers have established five task teams, selected an event organizer, mobilized the required resources; active mobilization and promotion activities will be carried out to attract more national and international participants to the Congress”.

The congress to be held under the theme: “Towards Global Health Equity: Opportunities and Threats” will serve as a platform to exchange new knowledge and experiences in the areas of public health. The Congress will host 16 plenary sessions, 550 poster presentations, and an exhibition. There will be over 134 abstract presentations spread over plenary and concurrent sessions in addition to the 40 special invited sessions on key selected topics relevant to the main theme. 790 abstracts were received and peer-reviewed out of which 684 were accepted. About 113 abstracts submitted were from Ethiopian professionals.

This year’s theme of Global Health Equity requires widening our observation to bring into view the ways in which jobs, working conditions, education, housing, social inclusion, and even political power influence individual and community health. The 13th World Congress on Public Health is, therefore, expected to discuss on such public health issues and come up with a declaration that would be submitted to the WHO Health Assembly.

Dr Tewabech Bishaw further emphasized to the gathered media that the 13th world congress will also bring an unprecedented exposure to Ethiopia and hence is an invaluable opportunity to place Ethiopia’s public health interventions undertaken as part of the National Health Sector Development Program in the Congress’s agenda. She also urged the media to be at the forefront in branding Ethiopia as an emerging country with strong investment opportunities and an incredible tourist destination.



Dr. Tewabech Bishaw President of EPHA

The recommendations from this Congress will contribute to the global health development efforts. Furthermore, “...we also believe that the congress will give visibility to the African Federation of Public Health Association, the Youngest Regional Public Health Association established only six months ago in September 2011”, she added.

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Health Equity in the Globalized World

By Dr. Mengistu Asnake, MD, MPH, Past President of EPHA (2006-2009) Out of the fundamental aspirations grounded in society, the state, condition and trend of our health has become a major indicator of progress and development to showcase how well or poorly we are doing as a community or a nation.

That is why health is referred in many spheres as a fundamental human right and a basic human need. And millions of Public health personnel in partnership work in tandem with a range of governmental and non-governmental entities to help improve the health and wellbeing through education, promotion of healthy lifestyles, and research for disease and injury prevention before they occur. Despite the millions working and billions invested to improve health conditions, millions fall victims to premature death, disease, and disability which are avoidable.

A basic principle of public health is that all people have a right to health and in an ideal world of equal opportunity we would all be free to choose our own health. Health equity as understood by public health literature and practice is when everyone has the opportunity to attain their full health potential and no one is disadvantaged from achieving this potential because of their social positions or other socially determined circumstances.

Today people have dramatically different health outcomes depending on where they live. In the western world on average people expect to live more than 80 years and in most sub-Saharan African countries, fewer than 50 years. In countries at all levels of income, health and illness follow a social gradient: the lower the socio-economic position, the poorer the condition of the health. These inequities don't have to be the way it is and not right to be like this.

Health inequalities occur through differences in health status or in the distribution of health determinants between different population groups. Some health inequalities are attributable to biological variations or free choice and others are attributable to the external environment and conditions mainly outside the control of the individuals concerned. In the first case it may be impossible or ethically or ideologically unacceptable to



Dr. Mengistu Asnake, MD, MPH

change the health determinants and so the health inequalities are unavoidable. In the second, health inequality is caused by the unequal distribution of income, goods, and services which is unnecessary and avoidable as well as unjust and unfair, so that the resulting health inequalities also lead to inequity in health.

Tackling health inequities is very complex phenomena and it requires widening our lens to bring into view the ways in which social determinants such as employment and working conditions, education, appropriate housing, affordable energy, economic and social relationships, access to care and resources, and even political power influence individual and community health. When societal resources are distributed unequally by the different social determinants, population health will be distributed unequally along those lines as well.

In order to tackle the different global health inequities there is a need for a concerted effort by different public health experts and institutions. As a multidisciplinary professional association, the World Federation of Public Health Associations (WFPHA) which has a mission of promoting and protecting global public health is one of the institutions which stand for such causes. One of the WFPHA platforms for such kind of initiatives is its triennial World Congress on Public Health which has been held since 1975. The 13th World Congress on Public Health with the theme of "Moving towards Global Health Equity: Opportunities and Threats", will be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from April 23-27, 2012. The congress will bring together several public health experts across the globe to discuss different health



issues including its major theme global health equity.

The congress will offer a good opportunity to exchange views and share good practices on what has been achieved at national, regional and global levels on Social Determinants of Health and call for the urgent need to increase the commitment by countries to address the root causes of health inequities in order to create a fairer and healthier society for all.

One of the major lessons we have learnt from the work of the WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health is that we can achieve health equity within a generation provided that governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders come together to reverse this trend of inequality and improve the lives of their citizens.

The Congress is taking place at a time when health inequalities and disparities are on the rise globally and widening among different population groups. As a result, the deliberations at congress will offer practical lessons learnt and experience gained on a number of concerns over the extent and consequences of health inequalities from around the world. The contributions and lessons from a wide-range of experts across multiple sectors will undoubtedly be of an asset to policy makers and implementers from various levels of government and other stakeholders in alleviating the health of those worse off up to a level that is acceptable.

I urge all participants of the congress to share their knowledge and expertise in bringing about better health conditions and achieving global health equity for all.

CSDH (2008). Closing the gap in a generation: health equity through action on the social determinants of health. Final report of the Commission on Social Determinants of Health. Geneva, World Health Organization.

The African Federation of Public Health Associations (AFPHAs) Officially Launched

The African Federation of Public Health Associations (AFPHAs) was launched during the 61st session of the World Health Organization's (WHO) Regional Committee Meeting for Africa held in Yamoussoukro, Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, from 29 August to 02 September, 2011.

The AFPHAs which is currently composed of 27 African public health associations, subsequently held an inaugural meeting attended by the President of the World Federation of Public Health Associations and representatives from 27 African public health associations. From Ethiopia, Dr. Tewabech Bishaw, President of EPHA, Dr. Wakgari Deressa, Vice President of EPHA and Mr. Hailegnaw Eshete, Executive Director attended the meeting.

On this inaugural meeting, the Federation discussed and adopted constitution and bylaws for the newly established federation and elected Executive Committee members with Dr. Mathias from Burkina Faso as president, Dr. Flavia Senkubuge of South Africa as vice president and Dr. Tewabech Bishaw of Ethiopia as secretary general. Other Executive Committee members were also elected from Algeria, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Mozambique and Uganda.

The seat of the AFPHA was assigned to be permanently based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It's currently being housed in the Ethiopian Public Health Association (EPHA) Headquarters. Membership to the AFPHA is open to all multidisciplinary African public health associations.

The Federation was established with the vision of bringing about and ensuring a healthy and productive society in Africa by organizing and involving pertinent parties across the continent and the world to influence policies, strategies and activities that will positively impact the health of all African people.



Key Organizations Sponsoring the 13th World Congress on Public Health (WCPH)

A considerable amount of money has been donated by local and international organizations in support of the 13th WCPH. These organizations have provided the Congress with technical and financial support through various mechanisms and levels of sponsorship, namely Platinum, Gold, Silver and Bronze.

Key Partners and organizations supporting the congress include FMOH, CDC, USAID, UNICEF, UNFPA, MIDROC Ethiopia (Addis Park), Pathfinder International, Clinton Foundation, Abt Associates, Palmolive/Colgate, Pfizer, AETNA Foundation, Siemens, ARC, Development Bank of Ethiopia, Deloitte, TB Care, IPAS Ethiopia, GAVI Polio CORE Group, JSI Group, FHAPCO, Africa Insurance, and PSI. WHO-AFRO Office has also provided a significant amount of financial contribution sponsoring delegates of the African Public Health Associations to attend the 13th WCPH.

In addition to the WHO-AFRO office support, the WHO Country office in Ethiopia has been supporting EPHA Congress secretariat by recruiting and assigning temporary support staff for the positions of secretary and a driver. It is to be recalled that the WHO country office had donated a used CRV HONDA vehicle to EPHA valued at 19,400 USD to strength and support transportation facilities as EPHA's scope of work is constantly expanding.

Furthermore, the International Development Research Center (IDRC) has given a grant to the Ethiopian Public Health Association (EPHA) supporting the 13th World Congress on Public Health (WCPH). The grant is intended to enable EPHA to consist at least the re-allocated 85% of the sponsorship for low and Middle-income countries' participants. The remaining fund will be spent to support other congress activities jointly managed by the World Federation of Public Health Association and EPHA.

Please note that these sponsors and supporting organizations and partners may not exhaustive and could include others that have supported the Congress in different ways after the publication of this article.

Training for journalists on Global Health Equity

The Ethiopian Public Health Association (EPHA) organized a half-day training for journalists to help them understand and communicate to the public the theme of the 13th world congress on Public Health - Towards Global Health Equity: Opportunities and Threats. The training was opened with a keynote address by Ato Motuma Temesegen, head of the Minister's office of the office of Government Communication Affairs.

In his address to the participants, Ato Motuma recognized the achievements of the Association that has been attained since its establishment in 1989 in pursuing the objectives stated in its mandate. He noted that with a membership of more than 4000, EPHA is one of the largest professional associations in the country.



Journalist doing group work

Ato Motuma pointed out that, it is on the basis of its effort and contributions to the sector, nationally and internationally, that the World Federation of Public Health Associations selected EPHA to host the 13th World Congress on Public Health which hitherto has been staged in the countries of the developed world such as Germany, Canada, India, Israel, the UK and others. The congress was held in Africa for the first time in 1997 in Tanzania and our hosting makes it the second time in Africa.

Bringing together no less than 3,000 health professionals from around the world, Ato Motuma said, the benefits of the congress ranges from strengthening the country's health sector to promoting conference tourism.

Ato Motuma closed his remark by urging all involved including the journalists and media people to repeat the good result of their work shown during the ICASA event while wishing the trainees for a successful session and thereby officially opening the training. More than 40 Journalists attended the training organized at the Ras Hotel in Addis Ababa.





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