



Statement submitted by the Global Alliance for Surgical, Obstetric, Trauma and Anaesthesia Care to the Partnership Forum

Working Towards a Civil Society UN Collaboration Mechanism for Health

We thank the Partnership Forum for the opportunity to read this statement on behalf of the 70 member organizations of the Global Alliance for Surgical, Obstetric, Trauma and Anaesthesia Care, including ECOSOC-accredited organizations the International Federation of Surgical Colleges, Operation Smile, and Smile Train.

The conclusion of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is upon us, and yet the 2023 Global Sustainable Development Report revealed slow, no, and even reverse progress across indicators for the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the impact that a health crisis, and a devastating lack of health system preparedness, can have on many dimensions of global progress. This impact is not limited to the country level, as health-related global governance is higher on the agenda at the United Nations General Assembly than ever before.

As we look to overcome major barriers and reinforce the systems that enable sustainable development, now and post-2030, it is critical that “health for all” is recognized for what it is—a cross-cutting agenda that touches nearly every policy area under the purview of the UN. Civil society has an essential role to play in consistently and coherently representing the interests of people who need health care, as well as the providers and supporting structures delivering that care.

Health systems strengthening requires a principled approach. Country-led and community-centered priority setting for health is non-negotiable. Objective measures of need, in addition to cost-effectiveness, should guide the content of national health strategies and the available funding for their implementation. Policy development processes should be intentionally designed to be interprofessional and multi-sectoral, so as to address social and structural determinants of health, and issues such as climate change.

Without a stronger commitment to these principles, the child burned in a cooking fire, the adolescent injured in a road traffic accident, the pregnant mother who needs a cesarean section, and the growing number of heads-of-households, parents, and grandparents at risk of heart attack or stroke may never receive the quality, safe, timely, and affordable health care they deserve, simply based on the lottery of their birth.



Civil society is well-equipped to lead a re-prioritization of health within the UN, but there is a need for a mechanism of coordination. This mechanism should have a formal and direct engagement role with the UN sustainable development agenda and with the World Health Organization. Today in this forum, we call on partners across the health sector to join us in exploring the opportunity for creating a civil society UN collaboration mechanism for health.