CAPE TOWN CALL TO ACTION

A. Preamble

After two years of participatory engagement and planning we, the People's Health Movement have gathered 800 strong from 90 countries representing the voices of tens of thousands more in our movement across every continent in the world.

In Cape Town we have:
* strengthened and deepened our solidarity
* expressed our outrage at the continuing global health crises that are embedded in myriad structural and socio-political inequities;
* developed principles for alternative economic, political and social orders; and
* re-committed ourselves to work towards the world we have envisioned

We reaffirm our commitment to the People's Charter for Health and the (Cuenca Declaration) which are the foundational documents to this Call to Action.

This Call to Action will guide our work until the fourth People's Health Assembly is held.

B. The Global Health Crisis

Our health is threatened by the crisis of capitalism, manifested in food, ecological, financial, economic and political crises. These crises underpin the growing global health inequities within and between countries.

Health crisis: Growing health inequities

Underpinning the health crisis is the failure to address the social, political and environmental determinants of health resulting in: the erosion of food sovereignty; inadequate income; and a lack of fair and equitable access to water, housing and sanitation, education, employment and universal and comprehensive health services.

Sickness and of disability are being perpetuated in many ways. Among them are the marketing of, amongst other things, tobacco, alcohol and junk food; the pollution of air, land and water sources; the colonization of lands and other natural resources; the forced removal of vast numbers of the population, including indigenous peoples, from their lands and homes.

We have heard how:
* small farmers are being driven off their land by the dumping of subsidised foodstuffs from industrialised agriculture in the North;
* indigenous people are being herded off their land by the extractive mining industry;

- health of workers is jeopardised by the absence of safety and regulations at the workplace, as well as environmental degradation and pollution;
- poor people in dense urban settings are being driven to depend on junk food, because it is available more cheaply than nutritious natural food;
- the relegation of women's health to maternity and family planning on the one hand and the concerted attack on women's reproductive and sexual rights on the other is violating women's autonomy, personhood, dignity and human rights;
- women and young people are denied the right to sexual and reproductive health services;
- 'migrants and displaced people suffer xenophobia and lack of healthcare' and
- children's rights are being undermined by denying them the conditions in which they can thrive and flourish.

Millions of families, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, are being denied access to comprehensive primary health care and universal health services by poverty and other institutional barriers. In high income countries, there has been a continuing campaign to reduce funding and support for the public sector and to replace public services with the market. Moving health care out of the public domain makes it easier for large capitalist enterprises (big pharma, big insurance and bio technology) to increase sales and profits, working in close partnership with those who make profits from the delivery of health services. The commodification of health has been intensified through a reductionist, industrial, biomedical model.

An emerging global trade and investment regime (driven by multilateral, plurilateral and bilateral trade and investments agreements) is seriously undermining universal social entitlements and the powers of states to regulate activities' of corporations and private financial institutions.

Access to affordable medicines has been compromised as a result of the WTO-TRIPS Agreement and the continuing pressure on developing countries to adopt TRIPS-plus standards through trade agreements and bogus anti-counterfeiting initiatives.

While we welcome the recent upsurge of interest in the concept of universal health coverage, we oppose the idea that this be achieved through the promotion of a minimalistic insurance model that would operate within a marketised system of health care, or worse still, be used as a context or excuse to dismantle or undermine public hospitals and promote corporate interests in health care delivery. Universal health coverage must be achieved through organized and accountable systems of high quality public provision.

The health crisis also reflects a crisis in effective and accountable global health governance. The dimensions of this crisis include:
- The undermining of the World Health Organisation
- The fragmented and uncoordinated health aid industry
- The undue influence of an unaccountable private institutions over health policy and programming
- A general approach that seeks to remedy the problems of structural violence and inequality through a charitable approach rather than through systemic and structural transformation.

The crises of capitalism

The global health crisis is the result of the current capitalist crisis and the globalized imposition of a neoliberal political and economic model, which has several inter-related dimensions, among them: political, food, economic, financial and ecological.

The neoliberal model of globalization, which first emerged in the 1970s as a response to declining rates of profit and wealth accumulation by reducing costs of production (through technology and outsourcing), opening new markets (through trade and investment liberalization) and expanding the private and corporate ownership of both physical and intellectual assets.

The model has been forced on developing countries through structural adjustment programmes, trade agreements and investment treaties, effectively legally locking many developing countries into the neoliberal paradigm.

This model was supposed to have sparked global growth for the benefit all. Instead, it has increased global economic inequality through unfair and asymmetric global economic integration, undemocratic global governance and the dramatic expansion of unregulated financial capital divorced from the 'real economy' of production and consumption.

The belief that continuous economic growth is the most important goal to be pursued by governments needs to be challenged. The present growth-based model is highly inequitable and, at best, extremely inefficient in reducing poverty and meeting people's living needs. It is also pushing the planet to a tipping point where the future survival of humanity itself may be at stake.

Meanwhile, the current development and aid industry merely sustains and reproduces existing social and political inequities; and needs to be discredited as a solution to the problems of capitalism.

The political crisis is rooted in the lack of accountable, transparent and democratic decision-making. Globalisation has resulted in the immense concentration of power amongst a wealthy and corporate elite, who actively undermine democracy and social justice through the influence and corruption of national governments and international institutions. Even in countries with progressive governments, spaces for democratic participation are closing down and protest is being criminalized.

Imperialism has increased the use of its military might to maintain and expand its control over the political architecture as well as resources of the planet. The war industry, having blighted lives in many parts of the world, is deeply embedded within the capitalist economic system.

There is a need to redesign our political culture and institutions, both nationally and globally; create relations based on solidarity; and put in place the mechanisms of accountability needed to run the global political, economic and social structures in a manner that is just, equitable and sustainable. We need to nurture a culture of:
- social responsibility, shared meaning and collective contribution (to replace individualism, materialism and selfishness);

- human and collective security (so we can be secure together and not at each others' expense);
- religious tolerance;
- respect, where relationships are built around solidarity and a rejection of domination or exploitation of one group by another; and
- harmony with nature.

The financial crisis is rooted in the de-regulation of banks, that were allowed to become 'too big to fail,' to increase the ratio of loans (debts) to assets, and to speculate heavily on currencies, derivatives and mortgages. A new form of neoliberal capitalism led to the creation of increasingly risky debts into investment instruments which were then sold to governments, pension funds and other banks around the world. When the US real estate bubble burst in 2007, the banking crisis quickly became global with jobs in the developing world disappearing in the wake of a global recession. Governments quickly went into debt to bail out their banks and to invest in their own economies to cope with the global recession. The failure of national and global institutions to prevent these developments reflects the domination of politics by finance capital.

Worse still, the response of national and international institutions to the financial crisis has been merely to restore the confidence of the same institutions and financial markets that had caused the crisis in the first place. Governments have swiftly enacted an 'austerity agenda' – cutting health and social spending - effectively deepening and reinforcing the very neoliberal economic model the crisis had so discredited, and handing even more power to the financial capitalist class.

The ecological crisis mirrors the rise in global inequalities as characterized by the obscene over-consumption of a small minority that is overstretching the capacity of the planet and a large majority of humanity who are denied even their basic needs. We all live on one planet – a fragile planet – that sustains the life of all. But the resources of this planet are being privatized and plundered in ways that are damaging and unjust. Public stewardship of our scarce resources is the only solution to the equitable protection of the planet.

Coercive population policies enacted in the name of climate protection are now violating women's rights. Rich nations are passing on the burden of the ecological crisis onto the poor through other various mechanisms including through the shifting of negative externalities onto poor peoples. Many of the effects of overproduction and consumption and climate change are felt by the world's indigenous communities, small-scale peasant farmers, the poor and the working classes.

The crisis of climate change is also clearly part of the crisis of capitalism. Although the planet is capable of providing for the needs of all its people, the current system of production and consumption only undermines the natural basis of life through a need for constant growth, while leaving billions of people in poverty.

The annual Conference of the Parties (COP) meeting under the UN Convention on Climate Change has failed miserably to ensure the rapid reduction in the emissions of greenhouse gas emissions. Under the domination of predatory transnational corporations the

negotiations have sought to impose false solutions such as carbon trading, Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) and other market/financial incentives to safe guard the continuity of profit rates and the continuity of economic growth.

The food crisis as manifested by the existence of a billion hungry people and two billion overweight or obese people is a manifestation of a much larger and more pervasive malaise, caused by the loss of food sovereignty and of control by communities and poor nations over their own resources. The food system is dominated by transnational corporations (Big Agribusiness and Big Food Corporations) which has resulted in, among other things, mono-cropping and the replacement of food crops with crops for bio-fuels; a huge increase in the speculative trading of food grains; unfair trade agreements; and oligopolies in the food retail sector. The food crisis is now being worsened by 'land grabs', a new form of colonialism in which transnational corporations and sovereign wealth funds are acquiring large tracts of arable land in poor and often poorly governed countries – displacing domestic food production systems as well as rural peoples from their lands. Meanwhile, hunger and malnutrition is being converted into a new market for processed ready-to-use foods (RUTF) and nutriceuticals, often assisted by the aid and technical assistance industry.

C. Our Alternative Vision

Our alternative vision is idealistic. We seek a better world. We believe that transformative and radical change is required and can be achieved. Our vision consists of a number of inter-related dimensions:

- A new economics
- New economic systems
- A more just and democratic set of political and economic processes and institutions
- Better global heath governance
- Equitable and Public Health Systems

We need **a new economics**, which values every individual equally, not every dollar. It should be based on the objective of maximising benefits to people – their health, well-being, and quality of life – not total output or income; and the benefits of income and consumption should be measured on this basis. It should seek to minimise the use of what is genuinely scarce in an absolute sense – environmental resources and capacity – not what is scarce only in an economic sense, while maintaining sustainable livelihoods for all. And it should be based on collaboration, within and between communities and nations, not on competition. This is an economics that would be socially directed rather than market driven.

We also need **new economic systems** that would:
- ensure that everyone has enough, while discouraging over-consumption;
- encourage appropriate, equitable and sustainable consumption, with the least ecological and human impact, reflecting a commitment to future generations and harmony with the planet.
- replace existing global and regional trade and financial agreements with those that will eradicate food insecurity and malnutrition;
- be rooted in local communities and peoples' lives within them, having an obligation to local communities while being globally responsible;
- establish and develop worker controlled enterprises;
- create sustainable, dignified work (whether formal employment, informal work, barter, or self-reliance) that meets basic needs for all, while protecting the environment;
- build solidarity between people;
- reverse the land grabs have occurred and restoring them to forms of accountable and appropriate ownership and stewardship; and
- be rooted in the effective measurement of societal progress on the basis of health, social and environmental indicators.

We need a new system of global governance, including the international trade and finance systems, that places health, well-being, human rights and environmental sustainability at the centre of all policies, and genuine equality of influence at the heart of all decision-making, and which would fulfill the standards of democracy, accountability and transparency applicable at the national level.

We need **news systems of national governance** in which electoral democracy is not captured by capital or undue private influence; where forms of participatory democracy are included as component of governance; and where people are protected and

empowered by adequate constitutional rights and protection, including the right to protest against conditions or practices that create social exclusion and oppression.

We seek a world in which governments would:
- work multi-laterally to reach peaceful resolutions to international conflicts
- refrain from imposition of their own policies and interests on other sovereign nations, whether through force or by economic pressure;
- be held accountable to the full implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, including ensuring the systems for the provision of all dimensions of social and economic security

A new system of global and national governance would include regulatory structures that ensure:
- fair and progressive taxation regimes within and between countries that would enable a transformative and equitable redistribution of resources and power
- effective closure of tax havens and democratic reform and regulation of the international banking system;
- fair trade arrangements;
- A new regime for research and development;
- A new and open regime for the production and management of knowledge and technology that protects findings essential for human and ecosystem health from private capture, and which promotes a new and open regime of knowledge sharing

Specifically, in the arena of **global health governance**, our vision would see a more coherent and accountable system of governance that would be free from corporate influence and the influence of unaccountable private actors. This would include a radical rationalization of the multiple GHPs and funds that would be replaced with new and more accountable mechanisms for the management and allocation of global public finance would need to be established, working with and through UN institutions.

WHO
- must follow its constitutional mandate to act as the directing and coordinating authority for international and global health
- must be fully and adequately funded by assessed and untied contributions from sovereign nations
- accountable to countries and the people of the world

Health systems should be:
- Universal, integrated and comprehensive, and also provide a platform for appropriate action on the social determinants of health;
- based on accessible, effective, gender-sensitive, youth-friendly and free comprehensive primary health care, accountable and appropriate to people's health needs;
- accessible to all, with no discrimination on the basis of gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, economic status, sexual identity, disability, cultural knowledge or language;
- welcoming of alternate cultural understandings of health and systems of healing, and not based solely on biomedical concepts of health and illness;

- properly and adequately publicly financed with public expenditure representing the major share of total health expenditure and capable of protecting the population against the rising costs of health care;
- be capable of retaining local health workers within the national health system rather than losing them to international migration
- built around an integrated network of public hospitals and public and community health care facilities and delivery, where other non-commercial health care providers work in a regulated and ethical environment.
- participatory and responsive to peoples' needs; and
- compatible with sound ecological principles and practices.

We should also develop frameworks of analysis and a global community of public health practitioners academicians and activists who can work on innovative and creative design solutions to ensuring more effective, efficient and equitable public health systems.

D. What is to be Done?

This call to action is directed to all delegates of the third Peoples Health Assembly and their fellow health and social activists from across the world.

D1 Power to People; Building the Movement

No change will happen without the mobilization of the people. Power will not be given to the people unless we force it out from the political, corporate and financial elites; and hold our public institutions accountable and make them work in ways that are transparent and truly representative and that serve the public interest and social justice. All this requires the building of social and political power amongst people and communities.

The third PHA has celebrated the successes of the growing People's Health Movement especially in terms of the growth of new PHM country circles in Africa. While we are a movement focused on health and built mainly around health activism, we share many similar goals with other social movements that are also seeking a more just and sustainable world. In order to diminish the power of financial capital; democratise governance; and defeat neoliberal economic policies, we will need to build a more effective and broad-based social movement.

To this end, we will commit ourselves to building alliances with other movements and organisations who seek progressive and transformative change. PHM is in a unique position to build alliances across existing movements. These include the movements of informal and formal sector workers, the landless, indigenous peoples, women and youth. We need to build solidarity with those struggling against big dams, nuclear power plants, illegal mining and movements of people affected by hazardous working conditions. We need to work with the environmental justice movement. We will seek to encourage greater trans-disciplinary engagement with, amongst others, progressive economists, environmental scientists, lawyers, urban planners and political-social scientists.

We will leave Cape Town determined to:
- set up new PHM circles where they do not exist
- energise, broaden and deepen the work of PHM country circles where they do exist

- strengthen and develop the issue-based circles of the PHM

We will leave Cape Town with a renewed and reinvigorated global Steering Council that will facilitate the building of our health movement. Our Steering Council will improve communication within the movement, facilitate effective coordination across the movement, and ensure organic linkages with regional and country circles. This should include facilitating the recruitment and support of PHM outreach workers to assist the development of the PHM in countries and regions.

We will strive to foster and develop community based struggles, campaigns and advocacy initiatives from local to national and global levels on multiple fronts, to develop the health movement in the coming phase.

D2 Creating and communicating alternative visions, analyses, discourses and evidence

We recognise that the neoliberal orthodoxy and the vested interests of the rich and powerful are heavily represented in the mainstream media. We recognise the power of the mainstream media and corporate propaganda in shaping prevailing views and attitudes, and sustaining the belief that there is no alternative to the current political and economic systems

We recognize that many scientific journals and institutions of education and knowledge generation act to legitimize and sustain the current system. We recognise the lack of investment in research, monitoring and surveillance that would serve the interests of the poor and promote the global social justice and equity agenda.

To this end we will leave Cape Town and commit to:
- communicating alternative visions, analyses and discourses to the people, using a wide variety of media and communication techniques, especially those that engage people creatively.
- using the Global Health Watch as an instrument to communicate an alternative progressive analysis of the state of global health and critiques of the current institutional framework for global health. We will work to improve the dissemination of the contents of the GHW in other languages; other mediums; and to a greater diversity of audiences. We will create and establish local and national health watches.
- expanding and extend the reach of the IPHU as a means of education, empowerment and mobilisation
- expanding processes such as community based monitoring for ensuring health system accountability and community oriented action research.

D3 Organising and planning to make change happen

To make change happen, movement building and alternative analyses must be translated into concrete campaigns and projects. Local and national actions can only be planned and

organised at the local and national level. However, as a global movement, we will seek to actively support and facilitate campaigns, by

- providing information and facilitating the sharing of information on the international context and country experiences;
- providing campaigning materials on issues of international priority;
- liaising and coordinating between organisations in different countries working on related issues;
- providing fora for sharing experiences;
- supporting publicity for campaigns at the international level;
- facilitating advocacy towards international organisations and Northern governments.
- Implementing the right to health campaign

In addition to supporting local campaigns, we will coordinate campaigns on global issues, seeking to ensure that they reflect the priorities, and are informed by the experiences, of PHM members globally. Such campaigns will include continuing work on:

- Democratising Global Health; WHO Watch and Supporting the Restitution of the WHO
- IPHU
- Global Health Watch

Specific campaigns

Tax campaign

Anti-privatisation

Extractive mining industries

Framework Convention on the Right to Health

R&D Treaty

Occupational Health and HW rights (safety and security of workers in especially in special economic zones)

Children's rights to food and against junk food and nutri-ceuticals

Compensation for brain drain

Fair and Healthy Work

Boycotts
Israel
Stop Killer Coca Cola

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Fundraising

To enable us to fulfill this role effectively, we will intensify our fundraising efforts, in order to strengthen the secretariat and increase the resources available for information, media and advocacy activities at the international level.