

# 2024 GHRP Annual Conference

## CONCEPT NOTE WORKSHOP 2

### Human Rights in Global Health Policies

Tuesday 5 November 2024, 11:00 – 12:30,

Maison de la Paix (Pétale 5), Chemin Eugène-Rigot 2E, Geneva

## TOPIC

The recent COVID-19 pandemic was both a health and human rights disaster, with governments enforcing lockdowns, quarantines, and other restrictive measures in ways disproportionately representing a threat to the enjoyment of human rights. From ensuring transparency to addressing the unequal impact of the virus across the globe, it is clear that relevant stakeholders must work together towards upholding human rights in global health policies.

In December 2021, during its second special session, the **World Health Assembly** adopted the decision entitled “*The World Together*”, creating an **Intergovernmental Negotiating Body** (INB) that includes all **World Health Organization’s** (WHO) Member States and Associate Members. The purpose of the INB is to draft and negotiate a WHO convention, agreement, or other international instrument focused on pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response, a so-called “*Pandemic Treaty*”. The goal is for this instrument to be adopted under Article 19 of the WHO Constitution, or other appropriate provisions as determined by the INB.

At the end of 2023, leading human rights organizations have raised concerns about the relevant draft, especially in relation to the lack of critical provisions to safeguard core human rights – particularly the right to health and the right to benefit from scientific progress – placing future pandemic responses at risk of repeating the failures witnessed during the Covid-19 crisis.

In June 2024, the INB’s mandate was extended by the Health Assembly, with the purpose of receiving the submission of the outcome for consideration by the **Seventy-eight World Health Assembly** in May 2025, or earlier by a special session of the World Health Assembly if possible in 2024. Negotiators are set to reconvene for a 12<sup>th</sup> round of discussions from 4-15 November 2024.

The workshop will draw on key insights from several influential sources, including the Global Health Law Consortium, and the International Commission of Jurists’ “*Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Public Health Emergencies*” and the Civil Society Alliance’s “*Human Rights Principles for a Pandemic Treaty*”. These frameworks, informed by past pandemics like Ebola, Zika, and HIV, will inform discussions on how to shape critical human rights commitments in the treaty. Key topics will revolve around rights-based approaches to health, including ensuring accountability, protecting human rights when using data and technology, and guaranteeing equitable access to quality diagnostics, medications, vaccines, and other essential health products and services during pandemics.

The essential role of human rights in global health policies will be explored, highlighting the need for pandemic-related restrictions to be human rights centered, non-discriminatory, equal, proportionate, lawful, as well as evidence-based. What measures do we need to ensure the respect of all human rights, including economic, social and cultural rights? And how should global health actors consider the relevance of protecting the key determinants of health – such as the rights to food, housing, education, water, and sanitation – without discrimination? And how to enforce human rights standards which apply alongside the areas covered under global health treaties?

## WORKSHOP MODALITY AND KICK-OFF SPEAKERS

The workshop will begin with kick-off speakers, each presenting for 3-5 minutes, offering key insights on the topic. Following these brief presentations, the floor will be open for all participants to contribute their perspectives, fostering a dynamic and inclusive discussion

- **Prof. Suerie Moon** – Co-Director, Global Health Center, Geneva Graduate Institute
- **Rossella De Falco** - Head of Right to Health Campaign, Just Fair UK
- **Pauliina Nykanen-Rettaroli**, Senior Technical Lead and Unit Head on Human Rights, WHO Department on Gender, Rights, Equity and Diversity (GRED)
- **Gianni Magazzeni** – Former Chief of the UPR Branch, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

## MODERATOR

- **Prof. Gian Luca Burci** - Senior Visiting Professor of International Law, Geneva Graduate Institute, and Academic Adviser, Global Health Centre

## PARTNERS

Global Health Platform / Global Health Centre, Geneva Graduate Institute

International Commission of Jurists