World Federation of Public Health Associations
Demand for Action- Melbourne 2017

On the occasion of the WFPHA 50th Anniversary and the Melbourne World Congress on Public Health

We, the partner organisations, with the delegates from over 83 countries gathered in Melbourne, Australia from 3-7 of April 2017 for the 15th World Congress on Public Health to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the World Federation of Public Health Associations (WFPHA). Together we articulate our concerns for the public’s health and demand world leaders make the public’s health a priority. Public health professionals and the institutions that represent them need to engage with leaders for the following reasons:

- Globalization is making us more dependent on one another, increasingly meaning the health of one person is intrinsically linked to the health of others
- There evidence of the impact of social, environmental, political and economic determinants of health on the public’s health, with opportunities to design environments that will support healthy choices. At the same time, there are huge risks for the public’s health if opportunities to design environments that will support healthy choices are not fully exploited.
- Security and stability, while responsibilities of individual countries are also linked to shared global governance. The right to health can only be enforced if a sustainable health system with efficient public health functions is available in every country
- The effectiveness of the health system and its public health functions in one country impacts on health and health services of other countries
As the only non-governmental organisation representing the broad interests and voice of public health at a global level with the support of our partners and the delegates, we make the following demands:

**VOICES – our commitment**

Public health is the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through the organized efforts of society. Health systems and public health functions can be treated as global public goods. It is the role of public health professionals and their organisations to contribute to:

- Improving health outcomes for all
- Fighting inequity as the primary driver of poor health, with particular emphasis on women, children, Indigenous peoples as well as poor and marginalized communities

Demanding political, social, environmental and economic change across all sectors for better and more sustainable health.

**VISION – building on the past, looking to the future**

We recognize the role played to improve health through the *Declaration of Alma-Ata* in 1978 *The Ottawa Charter on Health Promotion* in 1986, the *Rio Political Declaration on Social Determinants of Health* in 2011, the *United Nations Sustainable Development Goals* 2016, the *Shanghai Declaration on Promoting Health in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* 2016 and a series of declarations from preceding WFPHA World Congresses on Public Health.

We seek to build on these and our work over the last 50 years. Our future vision for a healthier world is set based on Protection, Prevention and Health Promotion as set out in the WFPHA’s *A Global Charter for the Public’s Health* and the *UN Sustainable Development Goals*.

**ACTION – using different sets of knowledge, tools and skills**

As public health professionals we strive to fully apply the mechanisms available to government, industry, private enterprise, academia and civil society to protect the public’s health, embrace prevention and promote health and wellbeing. We will make full use of social innovation and interactive technologies to encourage and support governments to promote equity and social inclusion while harnessing the knowledge, skills and priorities of our diverse populations through strong community engagement.
As public health professionals and those organisations that represent them we will work to reorient systems and strengthen ties for better health outcomes for all as we commit to the following actions and demands.

- **Our Demand for Action applies to all organisations that have impact on people’s lives and health including:**
  - Governments and government bodies at local, regional, national and international levels
  - Civil society including all non-government organisations
  - Universities and other educational institutions
  - Corporations and businesses

- **We demand all organisations and individuals with variable levels of influence to:**
  - Confirm the World Health Organization (WHO) definition of health as a state of complete physical, mental, and social wellbeing, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity and health as a human right
  - Strengthen legislation, regulation, and taxation of unhealthy commodities
  - Implement fiscal policies as a powerful tool to enable new investments in health and wellbeing
  - Strengthen global governance to better address cross-border health issues
  - Increase funding for sustainable health systems with universal coverage
  - Support strong global instruments, such as the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control to curb the power of industries that produce products harmful to health
  - Oppose international treaties that exacerbate health inequities and poverty - or are inconsistent with poverty reduction; civil and other wars that displace large groups of people; and exclusionary processes that disadvantage entire regions, countries, populations or communities
  - Commit to economic/commercial/ financial frameworks for policy and law internationally

- **We demand all organisations and individuals with variable levels of influence to:**
  - Use our capacities to train and empower the next generation of public health professionals to build upon health gains made to date
  - Commit to protecting human rights, social justice, equity and environmental sustainability and promoting social responsibility.

- **Where people are at risk in emergencies, instability, insecurity and disasters we commit to:**
  - Use our knowledge, tools and skills to work with a wide range of partners to improve health outcomes
  - Provide support for implementing country and community capacities in health and other sectors to manage the health risks associated with emergencies, instability, insecurity and disasters
  - Comply with the WHO International Health Regulations.

- **As national public health associations and public health professionals, we commit ourselves and call on others to join us to promote Protection, Promotion and Prevention in the context of:**
  - Good governance in relation to nations, international agencies and corporations
  - Improved public health capacity particularly by supporting a stronger public health workforce
  - More effective public health advocacy
  - Collection and dissemination of accurate public health information
Our call

In the context of these demands:

We call on governments to enable public health professionals and their organisations to carry out their work to develop further public health functions and quality health systems as global public resources.

We also call on governments to hold all sectors accountable for the health impacts of their policies and actions, consistent with the intent of the social determinants of health and their responsibilities to strive to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.