

Bangkok Call to Action: Renewing Our Commitment to Community Health Workers in a Time of Transition

4th International Community Health Worker Symposium | November 2025

We, the participants of the 4th International Community Health Worker (CHW) Symposium – CHWs, governments, civil society, the private sector, and global partners – continue to draw inspiration from the immense contributions of CHWs worldwide and call on the global community to renew its collective commitment to CHWs.

From remote villages to urban centers, in times of peace and conflict, CHWs deliver essential services, prevent and respond to disease outbreaks, and provide a vital and trusted link between communities and other levels of health care. Often working under difficult conditions, CHWs are lifelines for the most vulnerable and marginalized. CHWs are indispensable in delivering lifesaving services, building community resilience, and advancing gender equity and economic opportunity, especially for women, children, and adolescents.

At the 3rd International CHW Symposium, the Monrovia Call to Action (2023) affirmed the central role of CHWs in achieving universal health coverage and global health security.¹ Two years later, the world faces persistent challenges, including insufficient and unsustainable financing for community health, alongside a transformed landscape of declining development assistance and worsening crises – such as climate change, conflict, displacement, and non-communicable diseases – which strain already fragile systems.

Nevertheless, there has been significant progress in the formalization, integration, and protection of CHWs in several countries. An increasing number of nations have adopted policies supporting professional CHWs, and several are progressing towards implementation – clear evidence that governments are moving from commitment to action.

We celebrate governments that recognize and center CHWs as part of their national health workforce.² We stand as, and in solidarity with, CHWs around the world and celebrate CHWs' leadership, vision, service, and advocacy for change. We also celebrate the tremendous progress of CHW Associations in strengthening national health workforces for communities. We call on everyone to stand with us in our collective determination to secure, strengthen, reimagine, and professionalize CHW programs, and ensure CHWs are at the heart of the health workforce of the future.

Our Collective Calls

We urge the highest levels of leadership – Heads of State; Ministers of Health, Labor, and Finance; local governments; regional bodies; bilateral and multilateral partners; and UN agencies – in partnership with communities, civil society, the private sector, and CHW Associations to take urgent, coordinated action to:

1. Prioritize, professionalize, and integrate CHWs into national health policies and systems

¹ 3rd International Community Health Worker Symposium. (2023). *The Monrovia Call to Action: For investing in community health programs as an integral path to universal health coverage*. <https://chwsymposiumliberia2023.org/the-monrovia-call-to-action/>

² Future of Global Health Initiatives. (2023, December 12). *The Lusaka Agenda: Conclusions of the Future of Global Health Initiatives process*. <https://futureofghis.org/final-outputs/lusaka-agenda/>; The Presidency, Republic of Ghana. (2025, October 1). *President Mahama & global leaders launch the Accra Reset at UNGA 2025*. <https://presidency.gov.gh/president-mahama-global-leaders-launch-the-accra-reset-at-unga-2025/>.

We demand that CHWs be recognized as essential health professionals – fairly paid, trained, supervised, and supplied. CHWs must be integrated into national health systems; included in decision-making, planning, and budgeting; and protected by law. CHWs deserve safe working conditions, legal protection, and professional pathways.

- Recognize professional CHWs within national Human Resources for Health and primary health care strategies, and legally recognize CHWs as workers under national laws.
- Include CHWs, including women, in policy design, program implementation, and global health dialogues – nationally and internationally.
- Enact and enforce policy and legal frameworks that define CHW roles and guarantee fair and timely remuneration, rights, and protections, as well as support the development and implementation of CHW professionalization frameworks, training, and supportive supervision models that strengthen CHWs' professional status and capacity.
- Enact and enforce policy and legal frameworks that recognize and support CHW Associations, including their formation, status, and impact on policy.
- Institutionalize gender transformative CHW policies that reflect the gender differences across the career stages of CHWs to minimize workforce barriers to entry, maximize performance, develop skills, and advance careers in a safe, enabling environment.
- Prioritize CHWs in health sector reforms, climate adaptation, community-level peacebuilding, as well as pandemic and emergency preparedness and response plans.

2. Reinforce the power of CHWs to steward the health system, foster inclusion, and build trust in contexts of conflict, crisis, and exclusion

CHWs have a unique ability to build trust, cohesion, and peace in communities, by virtue of being “of” a community, not just “for.” Therefore, CHWs are, and must be formally recognized as, pillars of sustainable health systems. Through the turbulence of conflict and crisis, CHWs persist.

- Stand with and support CHWs providing services in communities excluded or marginalized from government health systems.
- Build locally rooted CHW programs that foster trust, cohesion, and peace in communities.

3. Secure and align financing to sustain quality community health programs

Funding gaps for CHW programs range from 25–50% in various contexts – the funding gap for scaled CHW programs in sub-Saharan Africa is estimated to be US\$5.4 billion annually.³ Yet investing in CHW programs can yield at least a ten-fold return on investment.⁴ The future of CHW programs depends on local and national leadership, innovative partnerships, and diversified, dependable financing models beyond traditional aid.

- Commit to progressive domestic budget increases for community-based primary health care, including CHWs, with credible transition plans away from donors.

³ Gichaga, A., Masis, L., Chandra, A., Palazuelos, D., & Wakaba, N. (2021). *Mind the global community health funding gap. Global Health: Science and Practice*, 9(Suppl 1), S9–S17. <https://doi.org/10.9745/GHSP-D-20-00517>; Perry, H., et al., The Investment Case for Building a "Next Generation" Primary Health Care Community Platform in Low-Income and Lower Middle-Income Countries for Accelerating Progress in Achieving Health for All 2025 (forthcoming), UNICEF: New York, New York, USA.

⁴ Masis, L., Gichaga, A., Zerayacob, T., Lu, C., & Perry, H. B. (2021). Community health workers at the dawn of a new era: Programme financing. *Health research policy and systems*, 19(Suppl 3), 107. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12961-021-00751-9>.

- Align international financing, including foundational and catalytic funding, with local and country-led priorities, strategies, and financing plans, and align investments across funders to avoid parallel structures.
- Strengthen existing coordination mechanisms, including national community health platforms, and leverage partnerships at all levels to improve coordination and joint, high-level advocacy.

4. Leverage technology and innovation that empowers CHWs, promotes equity, and drives evidence-based decision-making

We recognize that technology and innovation, when centered on people, can amplify the impact of CHWs and make CHWs' work more effective and efficient. We applaud the positive technological advances to date, and encourage the strengthening of governments' capacities to implement and scale technologies that are already working. We further urge the design of technological advances that complement the CHW role, augment human connections, and improve health data quality and use.

- Responsibly design, adapt, and utilize technologies – co-created with CHWs, communities, and host countries, and aligned with community health priorities, as well as national policies, strategies, and frameworks.
- Ensure that these technologies are inclusive, equitable, and accessible to support the work of CHWs, especially in low-resource settings.

Our Collective Commitment

CHWs are transforming health systems with resilient, equitable, and people-centered care. In this moment of transition, we choose solidarity over fragmentation; local and national ownership alongside global partnership; and innovation grounded in equity. We stand united to safeguard progress, expand opportunity, advance inclusion, and celebrate the role of CHWs as agents of health, equity, and hope in an uncertain world.

We pledge to advance a common agenda for CHWs rooted in rights, fairness, sustainability, and shared responsibility. Going forward, let us commit to:

- Engaging in joint action and advocacy to advance and safeguard progress towards supportive policies as well as innovative and sustainable financing mechanisms for CHWs at the local, national, regional, and global levels.
- Building and strengthening CHW Associations and coalitions at the local, national, regional, and global levels – because CHWs need power to make change.
- Convening the 5th International CHW Symposium in person in 2027-2028, with the support of current and previous hosts and donors, to continue the legacy and momentum of the CHW Symposia and to honor our commitment to accountability.

Collaboration and innovation are acts of solidarity, essential to protecting hard-won progress and driving us closer to achieving health for all. We invite all partners worldwide to endorse and implement these actions. Our commitment to health for all starts in communities, with CHWs.

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