

Global Health Equity Network

Zero Health Gaps Pledge

January 2023

The Global Health Equity Network (GHEN) brings together private sector executives, government representatives, academics, and civil society leaders to advance a collective vision of Zero Health Gaps. In our vision, all individuals have the fair and just opportunity to fulfil their human potential in all aspects of health and wellbeing. This means that there are no differences in healthy years in a person's life span, within and across communities. Achieving a world with Zero Health Gaps goes together with achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, creating a future where climate and human sustainability becomes a reality. This requires leaders across the global economy to participate in multistakeholder collaborations, share and learn from each other, invest and dedicate resources, commit to and sustain action, and measure and report impact.

Over the decades, it has become increasingly clear that health equity is critical to strengthening organizations and society – but vast inequities in health and wellbeing outcomes between and within countries persist. Today, the gap in life expectancy between Japan and Lesotho is 30 years.¹ Within the US, the gap in life expectancy between black males and white males is an average of 5 years, with pockets of even greater disparity.² Three key root causes of health disparities are inequality within societal systems, non-medical drivers of health, and systemic flaws in the healthcare system, including access to and quality of care. The non-medical drivers of health include environmental, social, economic, and cultural factors with significant impacts on health and wellbeing outcomes. The gap in years of human potential lost can be reclaimed by transforming the way organizations work, including the private sector. Collective impact can help close the health inequity gaps we see today. Leaders across industries can help drive this change by placing health equity at the core of their decision making for strategy, operations, and investments.

Placing health equity at the core is the right thing to do and it is the right business thing to do. A workforce that is healthy is more productive. A company that operates with health equity as a core principle is more likely to increase customer trust and loyalty. The communities where people live, play, and interact directly influence their health – yet another reason for organizations to work with communities to promote health equity. Collaborating with private and public sector organizations across the ecosystem who are also committed to health equity makes for a healthier supply chain workforce, which is inherently more resilient and sustainable.³

While positive health equity action is appreciated, a world with Zero Health Gaps requires a multi-disciplinary approach and concerted action. Actions include (but are not limited to) supporting strong Diversity, Equity and Inclusion programs; providing accessible high-quality health and mental health services; paying employees across the supply chain a living wage; investing in safe living environments, and many others.⁴ Each organization can play a unique role in advancing health equity, starting with a pledge to action, informed by ongoing measurement of impact, and supported by a community of likeminded leaders who continue to accelerate progress. These leaders can embed health equity as the human impact progress of their ongoing climate and sustainability work, namely through ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) strategies.⁵

¹ [World Bank](#)

² [U.S. life expectancy at birth by race - Human Progress](#)

³ See Business Case for Health Equity for additional insights

⁴ See Action Guide for Health Equity for additional steps to take

⁵ World Economic Forum, "[Investing in Health Equity: Why Strong ESG Strategies Health Build a Healthier, More Inclusive World.](https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Investing_in_Health_Equity_2022.pdf)"

The following pledge will be made by organizations who want to continue their health equity journey.

We pledge to:

1. Continually seek to understand how our organization can help address the root causes of health inequities and create a positive health equity impact.
2. Assess our own organization's health equity impact across our workforce (e.g., employee workplace health exposures), offerings and services (e.g., quality and accessibility for underserved populations), communities (e.g., investments in community health) and ecosystems (e.g., health equity promotion through advocacy and public statements).
3. Consistently seek to understand health equity needs across our workforce, consumer base, communities, and ecosystem to make strategic decisions, inclusive of investments, and use insights to inform our organization's choices from strategy to execution.
4. Measure the impact of our health equity efforts, such as health and wellbeing benefits, in ways that identify variations between and across groups, and use insight to inform decisions.
5. Seek to employ ethical use of data and strong privacy controls.
6. Look for opportunities to share progress externally, including potentially as a part of ESG and other sustainability reporting.
7. Establish and strengthen accountability systems within our organization by creating an environment where lessons can be shared and scaled, including having health equity as an agenda item at board meetings.
8. Collaborate with communities to identify key health equity needs and identify potential solutions, and to measure impact.
9. Inspire other organizations across sectors to act, to share learnings and collective investment decisions, and to accelerate the work of the GHEN and beyond.
10. Support the creation of a concrete, measurable roadmap with achievable global milestones towards health equity.

The GHEN is committed to convening leaders to help build a resilient and inclusive global economy that drives value for all. This pledge is a public statement from signatories that they are committed to help improve health equity and to embed health equity principles across their organizations. Each signatory is at a different stage of their health equity journey, so this pledge harnesses energy from across sectors and geographies to achieve a world with Zero Health Gaps.

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Organization/Role: _____