

Raising a Collective Voice from International One Health Leaders and Supporters: Summary of Advocacy Action from the 8th World One Health Congress in Cape Town and Call for more needed

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Background: International One Health (OH) stakeholders struggle with communication, coordination and collaboration across all global players. Therefore, the One Health Commission (OHC) works to help OH groups around the world learn about each other so we can join hands in force-multiplying, collective actions. This abstract presents a first of its kind collective One Health community action in September 2024 at the 8th World One Health Congress (WOHC).

Methods: Before departing for the 8th WOHC, the OHC learned that the United Nations (UN) Summit of the Future (SOF) was occurring at the same time as the WOHC, and that the words OH were nowhere in the program. The OHC thus suggested to WOHC organizers that the convening of so many One Health champions be used to send a joint letter seeking inclusion of OH in the Summit 'Pact for the Future'. On the 2nd day of the WOHC, a letter was drafted, an online portal was created for WOHC participants to sign in support of the letter and a newscast message was sent to all conference attendees alerting them to the initiative. The letter suggested specific language to be inserted. Fig. 1

Results: Twenty-nine organizations and 102 individuals signed in support of the letter. Though one co-leader of this action attended the SOF and did discuss OH in her session, the WOHC collective Call letter was not received in time to get OH included in the Summit Agenda Report or in the Pact for the Future.

Conclusion: Discussing the future without incorporating OH was a serious failure at the SOF. However, to our knowledge, this exercise was the first time that the international OH community organized into a unified voice demonstrating a very real appetite and potential for collective advocacy. This event also highlighted the urgency for OH advocates to participate in such events. There were opportunities to apply to speak at the SOF. Evidently Dr. Korsten was the only OH champion able to attend. There are additional upcoming opportunities to influence the Pact for the Future including a high-level review of the Global Digital Compact in 2027, a high-level plenary meeting in 2028 for the Declaration on Future Generations, and a Heads of State and Government meeting at the beginning of the 83rd session of the UN General Assembly in 2028 where the Pact for the Future will be comprehensively reviewed. Our challenge is to find ways to show up to make sure that OH thinking, acting and decision making are incorporated as actions in the Pact for the Future are advanced globally. The sign-on portal from the 8th WOHC collective action remains open.

Links of interest:

Pact for the Future:

- <https://www.un.org/en/summit-of-the-future/pact-for-the-future>
- <https://www.un.org/pact-for-the-future/en>

Letter and Signatures: <https://tinyurl.com/OH-Letter-UN-Sept24>

Sign the Letter: <https://tinyurl.com/OHforFuture>

Keywords: Collective OH Actions, Unified Voice, Advocacy

Figure 1. <https://tinyurl.com/OH-Letter-UN-Sept24>

