

PRESS RELEASE
Embargoed Until: 8 AM Pakistan time, May 9

Pakistan's Civil Society Steps Up to Support Dr. Sania Nishtar's WHO Bid

Recognizing the need for urgent reform of the World Health Organization, a coalition of civil society organizations from across Pakistan is rallying around Dr. Sania Nishtar's candidacy to be the next Director-General of WHO.

Spearheaded by LEAD Pakistan, more than 120 civil society organizations from Pakistan have united behind Dr. Sania Nishtar and her vision for a new World Health Organization.

"At present, the world is struggling to respond effectively to the challenges of new disease outbreaks, antimicrobial resistance, childhood obesity, widening inequities in health and other global health catastrophes," said Dr. Sania Nishtar, candidate to become Director-General of the World Health Organization.

"I'm honoured that civil society in Pakistan are standing behind my candidacy and ensure that their and other such civil society voice, global and calls for reform are heard in the new World Health Organization, I expect to lead" she added.

The civil society declaration states that while in government, Dr. Nishtar reestablished the Federal Ministry of Health in less than 100 days which dramatically changed how the Government of Pakistan responds to tackling disease. As co-chair of the WHO Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity, Dr. Nishtar brought all stakeholders together and negotiated a new path forward.

"Dr. Nishtar is the one candidate in the race to say that the status quo isn't working and reform is needed," said Ali Tauqeer Sheikh, CEO of LEAD Pakistan. "In Pakistan, Dr. Nishtar has a strong reputation for transparency, integrity and is a leader that actually delivers on her promises."

"We are grateful for the work Dr. Nishtar has done in Pakistan and we urge all Member States to get behind her reform agenda and elect her to be the next Director-General of the World Health Organization," said Shahnaz Wazir Ali, a development practitioner who serves on several Boards such as LEAD and SPDC.

"Dr. Sania Nishtar is an institution in her own right. She can promote the global mandate of WHO in line with the ground realities of different regions. Her work through Heartfile has impacted tremendously on the health of vulnerable groups in Pakistan" says Khalida for SACH, Struggle for Change.

Dr. Nishtar's leadership on the frontlines of the health crises in Pakistan, firstly as a doctor but then subsequently in civil society, government and within international agencies means that she is the only candidate who has the breadth and depth of experience and ambition to tackle global health crises head on.

Note to the Editor

LEAD Pakistan is a leading think tank working on climate change and water issues.

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