

CONVENING OF THE CHILD HEALTH CHAMPIONS GROUP

– Rome Platform

Convening: Child Health Champions Group

In the margins of the 78th World Health Assembly (WHA78)

Date: Wednesday, 21 May 2025

Time: 3:00–5:00 PM CET

Venue: WHO: Salle M505, M Building (near the U.S. Embassy and across from the new B Building)

INTRODUCTION

In a period of profound uncertainty in global health and development, marked by disruptions to longstanding programs and frameworks, the Paediatric HIV and TB Leadership Dialogue held at the Casina Pio IV, Vatican City, on 3-4 February 2025, provided an important moment for strategic reflection and renewed commitment.

Hosted by the Pontifical Academy for Life and the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, in collaboration with PEPFAR, UNAIDS, WHO, EGPAF, and Faith-Based Organizations, the Dialogue convened more than 70 leaders across sectors. Together, they identified urgent priorities to advance additional progress in response to paediatric HIV and TB while reaffirming a comprehensive and shared responsibility to children and mothers in today's shifting global health landscape.

The Dialogue called for transformative change: a bold, child-centered global health response. It recognized more effective and inclusive action on global health as both a challenge and an opportunity to improve efficiency, foster inclusive leadership, shift decision-making closer to high-burden countries, and prioritize country-level investments.

Stakeholders also highlighted the need to strengthen partnerships across sectors, including with the private sector, digital innovators, and faith and community leaders, and to advance integrated service delivery, streamlined regulatory frameworks, and sustainable access to care.

MOVING TO THE NEXT LEVEL: CONVENING OF THE CHILD HEALTH CHAMPIONS GROUP

This convening represents a strategic next step in the Rome Platform process, building on the outcomes of the Leadership Dialogue, which brought together key stakeholders committed to sustaining momentum and refining a shared agenda to advance advocacy, implementation, and accountability for child health.

Group Objectives:

- **Champion Child Health:** Advance strategies that place children, beginning with paediatric HIV and TB, at the center of global health agendas, supported by a strong and unified narrative.
- **Drive action:** Translate the recommendations of the Leadership Dialogue into practical actions and policy shifts across global and national levels.
- **Reimagine Leadership:** Explore opportunities for more inclusive and multisectoral leadership that prioritizes children and catalyze change in a shifting global health landscape.

PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

This convening will:

- Reflect on the key “takeaways” and recommendations from the Leadership Dialogue, prioritizing the most pressing issues identified and discussed.
- Identify concrete actions, advocacy priorities, and opportunities to elevate child health in the evolving global health landscape.
- Discuss priority actions for the (ad-hoc) Champions Group in 2025 to ensure children are central in the rebuilding of global health.

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Draft Agenda

Time	Agenda Item	Speaker/Moderator
15:00 – 15:15	Session 1: Welcome and Opening Reflections <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purpose of the Rome Platform and the Child Health Champions Group• Key takeaways from the Paediatric HIV & TB Leadership Dialogue (Feb 2025, Vatican)	Msgr. Robert J. Vitillo Member, Rome Paediatric HIV & TB Steering Group
15:15 – 15:40	Session 2: Global Health Disruptions & the Case for a New Leadership for Children Representatives from Countries <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Could you share your insights on how current global dynamics are impacting children in your country/in Africa, what	Moderator: Msgr. Robert J. Vitillo Discussants: Joy Phumaphi (PMNCH / ALMA) Representatives from

	innovative solutions are being implemented in response, and how a collaborative platform like this could support and amplify both national and global efforts?	Côte d'Ivoire, South Africa, and the African Union
15:40 – 16:25	Session 3: Open Discussion - Global Health Disruptions & the Case for a New Leadership for Children <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perspectives from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Tom McPortland, Elma Philanthropies -Linda Gail-Bakker, Desmond Tutu Health Foundation -Florence Riako Anam, Global Network of People Living with HIV -Marijke Wijnroks, The Global Fund to Fight HIV, TB, and Malaria -Doris Macharia, Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation -Helen McDowell, ViiV Healthcare/GSK Global Health - Ricardo Baptista Leite, Unite 	Moderators: Msgr. Robert J. Vitillo Mr. Chip Lyons
16:25– 16:50	Session 4: Reflections from each participant on the Champions Group Guiding Question: What role can this Champions Group play in shaping new models of leadership that are inclusive, country-led, and child-centered?	Moderator: Dr. Meg Doherty (3 minutes each)
16:50 – 17:00	Session 5: Closing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreement on immediate next steps 	Msgr. Robert J. Vitillo On behalf of the Rome Action Plan Steering Group

We look forward to active contributions from all participants during the discussion.
Guided questions:

Session 2: Global Health Disruptions & the Case for a New Leadership for Children

Representatives from Countries

- Could you share your insights on how current global dynamics are impacting children in your country/in Africa, what innovative solutions are being implemented

in response, and how a collaborative platform like this could support and amplify both national and global efforts?

Session 3: Open Discussion - Global Health Disruptions & the Case for a New Leadership for Children

- **Tom McPortland** – How can we reframe global health leadership to be truly inclusive, child-centered, and responsive to the realities of high-burden countries? What should be done differently to keep children at the table in the rebuild of global health?
- **Linda Gail-Bakker** - Considering the current wave of funding cuts affecting global health and research, how can we protect and prioritize innovation for children? What strategies can ensure that research efforts remain focused, impactful, and connected to access, especially in high-burden African settings? How can the Champions Group help sustain investment in paediatric research and ensure that innovations are translated into real solutions for children on the ground, despite shrinking resources?
- **Marijke Wijnroks** – How can the Global Fund help catalyzing domestic and other investments in child health amid declining international resources? How to move from discussion and debate about reforms to development and implementation of forward-looking solutions, especially in countries.
- **Florence Riako Anam**: How can we reframe global health leadership to be truly inclusive, child-centered, and responsive to the realities of high-burden countries? What role can the Champions Group play in challenging the status quo and accelerating transformative change in global health systems?
- **Doris Macharia**: How can we reframe global health leadership to be truly inclusive, child-centered, and responsive to the realities of high-burden countries? What role can the Champions Group play in challenging the status quo and accelerating transformative change in global health?
- **Helen McDowell**: With so much debate around institutional reform, how can we ensure this group focuses on implementation of forward-looking, life-saving solutions for children? How can we use this platform to create a bold, compelling global narrative around children's health that drives political and financial commitment?
- **Ricardo Baptista Leite**: How do we expand private sector engagement beyond pharmaceuticals to include digital, AI, and logistics sectors in advancing child health? How can we use this platform to create a bold, compelling global narrative around children's health that drives political and financial commitment?

Session 4: Reflections from each participant on the Champions Group

- What role can this Champions Group play in shaping new models of leadership that are inclusive, country-led, and child-centered?

- What role can the Champions Group play in challenging the status quo and accelerating transformative change in global health systems?
- How do we move from debate to implementation of bold solutions?
- Where do you see the greatest opportunities for collaboration?