

## Statement of Interest

Health Systems Global (HSG) has been a significant part of my own journey as a health policy and systems researcher (HPSRer) over the past decade. Like some in the membership, I didn't start off as a HPSRer – I have found my way here, and as a contributor to HSRs since 2012, and serving as South East Asia Regional Board Member for the past year. This has given me a range of perspectives as a relative outsider, newbie, symposium contributor, session organizer, moderator, Thematic Working Group member and Board Member. I therefore feel I can relate to the diversity of the membership itself.

I believe HSG has done well with setting up a norm for representation but is still subject to constraints to inclusion, for example with visa restrictions in the Liverpool conference or financial, technological, and linguistic barriers that preclude greater engagement even between symposia. This is especially the case with existing and putative members in the Global South and across a range of LMICs. Our approach, in my view, has to be about claiming spaces and deciding to do things differently from the status quo, where Global North institutions play a disproportionately large role in what the society does. Going forward, even us Global South – the privileged and connected lot, need to get out of the way – making space for better alignment of HSG priorities with the goals and needs of its membership.

In my view, HSG's three main priorities in the coming four years should relate to **representation, equity, and sustainability**. First, strategies are needed to widen and deepen our regional and country-level engagements – by way of providing windows of opportunity for all members and TWGs to contribute meaningfully. We should also prioritise, as we have, early career researchers, drawing upon and linking up alumnae networks of Emerging Voices, student groups and fellowship and capacity strengthening initiatives. Providing these groups with resources to lead activities will help not just with representation, but also with follow through/follow up. Second, intersectional equity, rather than being a conference theme or topical focus should be part of our DNA as an association – I believe this will set us apart from other institutions and also give us critical steer in terms of even how the Board operates and how it engages with a wide range of stakeholders. Third, it is essential for us to strengthen our financial footing as an association with predictable funding flows using creative, ethical, environmentally conscious and sustainable forms of resource mobilization. Here we have to get professional help with fundraising while also anchoring ourselves in our existing imperatives of representativeness and equity. There are lessons to be gleaned from other sectors, other associations and indeed from the networks of our own TWGs who, for example, engage with critical issues like gender equality and planetary justice.

In my experience, HSG itself can serve as an excellent platform for widening representation and enhancing engagement of health systems implementers and decisionmakers. I have done this at some length with government stakeholders in India. They have appreciated opportunities to present at HSR, to document their experiences and even write manuscripts! I think this can be a trust-building exercise that can eventually enhance HSG's ability to translate policy at the local level. Cross learning can be built on this, for example in the way SEAR and WPR have an APAC workplan. We have for some time carried out joint planning sharing intra and inter-regional events and platforms, also opening them up for global audiences. This to me is how I view contribution to “decolonizing” global health – more (local) walk and talk, where perspectives of the Global South are given berth and equal footing with those of the Global North, even if – and sometimes particularly if!- they are not interested in engaging with the “decolonization” debate itself.

I have been lucky to have worked closely with Board Members already, professionally, but also in my short Board Membership stint. I also bring experience in strategy planning, resource mobilization, and partnerships based on my own work and role at my institution – which, notably, is based in the Global South. I feel I have a lot more to give our association, a lot more to learn from our broader membership and Board Members.

I request the mandate from this membership to represent the interests of the Society and to reflect its truly global nature.