Personal Statement

Dear HSG colleagues:

Thank you for the opportunity to express my interest in running for the position of Board Member of Health System Global. I have been a member of the Society since its foundation in 2012, I got acquaintance with HSG due to my participation in the Emerging Voices for Global Health Program that same year.

From that moment on I have been witness of the evolution of our Society and I am very proud to be a member of a strong growing organization that has become a great voice on the global scene.

Our Vision Statement declares that "globally connected health systems research and policy communities contribute to the attainment of better health, equity and well-being." I firmly believe that nowadays, in a world of great challenges, this vision remains even more valid than before.

The main reason why I have decided to run for a position as Regional Representative for The Americas is that I believe I can make a significant contribution as a professional, as an "Emerged Voice", to help HSG achieve its objectives and goals. My plans if I got elected to the Board can be summarized in 3 key areas which I intend to make my priorities: 1) Consolidate the Society across the Region as a platform to link the global health community; 2) Strengthen the presence of HSG in the Region; and 3) Convert the Society into a bridge between the research community and the policy makers. Please let me explain a little further each one of this priorities:

1. Consolidate the Society across the Region as a platform to link the global health community.

Our Society has grown significantly since its foundation 12 years ago, nevertheless I do think that there is still space for greater expansion in the Region of the Americas, not only in terms of the amount of its members but also in terms of the amount of the collaborative relationships that could be established among its members to develop cooperative projects across regions. Strengthening and rethinking the work of the Thematic Working Groups can be a powerful tool to achieve this goal, as well as increasing the number of HSG institutional members such as universities, developing agencies and research institutes.

2. Strengthen the presence of HSG in the Region.

In a world that is still recovering from a major global health crisis but that at the same time has reassured its priorities till 2030 via the SDG agenda, and in which its major global organizations (UN, WHO, PAHO) are going through deep reformation processes, the voice of civil society organizations must be assured to be heard and taken into consideration so these strategic processes and changes will reflect the vision of the global system we need and want. HSG can become a platform for its members in the

Americas Region to increase their participation on the global process through its collaborative projects.

3. Convert the Society into a bridge between the research community and the policy makers.

Our Mission Statement states that we must *"(c)onvene researchers, policy-makers and implementers from around the world to develop the field of health systems research and unleash their collective capacity to create, share and apply knowledge to strengthen health systems"*.

Personally, I have to say this is one of the most compelling features I find about our Society, since it reflects on all the different phases of my professional career. I have worked as a researcher, as an academic, as an advisor to policy makers and as policy maker, and through all the different tasks and responsibilities that these different rolls have given me I have been a witness, and sometimes victim, of the frequent "divorce" between researchers and policy makers.

Researchers complain that they are not usually heard by the policy makers and when they are heard they are not always understood. On the other hand, policy makers complain that researchers perform studies that are not related with the prioritized agenda and they cannot translate their findings into useful recommendations to help them in the decision making process.

HSG has all the potential to become the perfect "match-maker" that will end this estranged relationship by means of providing its members with training opportunities on effective tools such as knowledge translation (KT) skills and by setting opportunities to reunite researchers and policy makers in friendly collaborative environments, among others.

Years ago, I had the honour to serve on the Executive Board for the International Federation of Medical Student's Associations (IFMSA), one of the world's largest and oldest international student organizations representing over a million medical students in 100 countries. I must recognise that it would be an honour and a thrill to work once again for an international organization developing deep impact projects. My experience in IFMSA allowed me to develop valuable skills in negotiation, developing consensus, cultural sensitivity by working with people coming for many different backgrounds and contexts.

Please accept my sincere gratitude for the opportunity to present myself and my vision for the society. I am certain that I can bring to the Board my extensive experience as well as my strengths and personality. I am excited about the opportunity to share experience and knowledge arising from my research and work to date, and to contribute as a young professional with energy, innovative ideas, and a collaborative mind-set.

If you would like to know more about me and discuss further my ideas, you can contact me via fco_oviedo@yahoo.com. Thank you very much for your time and kind consideration.

Yours truly,

Dr. Francisco Oviedo-Gomez