

VoiceofReason

AdvocacyGroupforGrowthandTransformation



May 17, 2017

H.E. Antonio Guterres
Secretary General of the United Nations

Your Excellency:

The search for the Director General of the World Health Organization has come down to three finalists, all excellent public servants and well regarded health professionals. The campaign, however, has taken an ugly turn as it heats up in the final days before member nations are due to vote. The scurrilous and unfounded charges leveled by Dr. Nabarro's advisor against the front runner, the highly respected former Health and Foreign Minister of Ethiopia and the unanimous choice of Africa, Dr. Tedros Adhanom, should be a matter of concern for the UN.

Your Excellency:

As Diaspora Civil Society leaders in these United States, very rarely do we comment on personnel matters. However, the ugly nature of this search process that is making the rounds in main stream and social media has forced us to write this open letter to you. Needless to say, it is a matter of grave concern and urgency to our diversified constituencies throughout the world.

The article accuses Dr. Tedros without any substantiation, of concealing cholera outbreaks in Ethiopia while he was health minister. This smear campaign against a candidate with a stellar record, admired by international governmental and non-governmental organizations alike for his innovative and result oriented approach to health problems in a country with a heavy disease burden, is beyond the pale. That this comes from the campaign staff of Dr. Nabarro, a sitting UN official, casts a dark shadow not only Dr. Nabarro, but drags the UN itself, putting the integrity and impartiality of this esteemed institution into question. Dr. Nabarro has to denounce such tactics and the UN needs to distance itself from this reprehensible mudslinging coming from the campaign offices by one of its officials.

As to these baseless charges, we believe the letter to the editor in response by Dr. Thomas

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Frieden, the Head of CDC in the Obama Administration, should put the matter to rest. He says “Cholera can be a devastating disease, but rapid action saves lives and stops outbreaks. Dr. Tedros created a network of nearly 40,000 female community health workers who were trained, supported and supervised to implement programs, including oral rehydration therapy, that prevent death from diarrhea and other causes.”

Andrew Mitchell, UK’s International Development Secretary between 2010 and 2012, in his article “The WHO failed on Ebola. With a future pandemic inevitable it needs reform” said, “Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has the potential and the ability to truly transform the WHO. By doing so, we will improve the health of billions of people around the world”

Former President Bill Clinton characterizes Dr. Tedros as one of the ablest public servants he has ever worked with, and former President George Bush, addressing the 17th International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA 2013), told the audience in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: "You've got a minister of health that is one of the best in the world: Dr. Tedros."

As leaders of Diaspora African organizations and not without a stake in the matter, we cannot remain silent as we witness the character assassination of Africa’s choice to lead WHO.

WHO is at a crossroads and in need of a wholesale overhaul, Dr. Tedros is the only one with the experience, the sensitivity and the creative approach to health problems that could oversee the badly needed reform of WHO to make it more nimble and responsive so as not to repeat the tragedy of the Ebola pandemic which claimed over 11000 lives.

Sincerely,

The Committee



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