The Moral Mandate of Public Health, organised efforts of society and implications for practice

Faculty of Public Health in collaboration with UCL Institute of Health Equity, International Environmental Forum, University of Ibadan Centre for Bioethics, Global Governance Forum and the UN European Centre for Peace and Development

Background
The 16th “World Congress on Public Health” is being held at a critical time in the history of humankind with significant implications for the public’s health and well-being. Global climate change, widening health inequalities, and the breakdown of old systems, structures and the divisive organised efforts of society have changed the world in which public health is being practised, with a call for “renewed ethical urgency” to its activities to meet the challenges of the times. A number of commentators have identified failings in public health leadership, and that it is time for public health leaders “to discover courage and purpose”, and recognise and act on its repeated moral failings, “a cry for ethical leadership” and the need for justice and solidarity. Social, environmental and commercial determinants of health in an increasingly interconnected world call for new ways of thinking and actions to grasp new opportunities and address the significant challenges facing public’s health and that of our planet at this time. There is growing recognition that public health should not be merely concerned with technical issues but urgent need to better understand its moral mandate, powers and core values and their implications for policy and practice.

The proposed World Leadership Dialogue will include a diverse multidisciplinary group of public health leaders, ethicists, academics and practitioners from around the world. This will include established distinguished leaders from the UK Faculty of Public Health, the Institute of Health Equity of UCL and other Centres, as well as young emerging leaders and thinkers. They will reflect on the moral mandate and core values of public health, its distinctive dimensions and implications for policy and practice. There will be considerations of the Sustainable Development Goals, health inequalities, migration and health security and the health issues they raise. Such case studies will highlight the need to better understand realities of our interconnected world, leadership, justice and solidarity as core public health values, to drive public health actions through organised efforts of society.

The Lancet 2019 photo competition images with their narratives on “Fresh Focus on Health” from around the world and other images will be used initially to set the scene. This will be followed by brief presentations around the moral mandate and values of public health, security, global governance and institutions and public’s health in the 21st Century, and their implications for leadership, practice, and the organised efforts of society. They will be followed by reflection and consultation by the panel with interactions with the audience.

Objectives
The objective of the dialogue will be to firstly to share and reflect on the key role of norms and values for public health policy, research and practice, and to highlight its moral mandate and some core values. Secondly there will be discussion on implication of its mandate and core values for leadership, policy and public health practice in the 21st Century, with particular reference to Sustainable Development goals, security and organised efforts of society.
Main messages
The session will assist participants to identify core values, mission and purpose of public health and practice in our interconnected world. It will provide a framework for reflection and actions to address the significant public health challenges in the 21st Century.

The Panel will include:

- Professor Sir Michael Marmot, Professor of Epidemiology at University College London (UCL), Director of the UCL Institute of Health Equity, and Past President of the World Medical Association
- Professor Simisola Akintola, Professor of Law, University of Ibadan, Nigeria
- Dr Frances Butcher, Public Health physician, DPhil Student at Ethox Centre and Wellcome Centre for Ethics and Humanities, University of Oxford, UK
- Dr Farhang Tahzib, Chair of the Public Health Ethics Committee, UK Faculty of Public Health, Professor Public Health, ECPD