



*Ulrich Laaser, WFPHA Lifetime Achievement Award for Excellence in Global Health. (Short Report).
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SHORT REPORT

WFPHA Lifetime Achievement Award for Excellence in Global Health Speech at the Award Ceremony

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Dear colleagues,

I am extremely honoured to receive this award today from the President of the World Federation of Public Health Associations (WFPHA), Prof. Luis Eugenio de Souza.

My involvement with WFPHA dates back to 2002, or even a bit earlier, when I became a member of the Governing Council - those times long ago! When I was elected as president for the period 2010-12, the first issue I wanted to solve was to move the secretariat of WFPHA from Washington DC to Geneva, the WHO centre. The transfer would not have been possible without the selfless support of Georges Benjamin, Executive Director of the American Public Health Association (APHA). It was about the same year that, happily, I could welcome Prof. Bettina Borisch as the Executive Director in Geneva, where she is acting since untiredly in this role.

These years, I also travelled to the Far East, China, Japan, and Indonesia to enlarge our membership. Last, certainly not least, with Dr. Tewabech Bishaw, I could support creating the African Public Health Association (AFPHA) and having our 13th

World Congress organised in 2012 in Addis Ababa - an absolute highlight.

With great satisfaction, I observed a recent drive to better integrate the Advisory Board into the work of WFPHA, which was, for some years, a missing link. To many more colleagues, I feel obliged, but I want to speak in the remaining minutes about my present engagement:

Global dynamics accumulate in the awareness of urgency because the fallout of merging trajectories becomes unpredictable, and the roof term for these concerns became One Health. This complex amalgam of expertise predominantly focuses on four interrelated concepts: Global, Public, Planetary, and Environmental Health.

One Health keeps these views on the destiny of humankind together. The atmosphere, the oceans, plants and animals – and the human existence on this planet are at stake - our civilisation is at stake!

The old testament is common to all three global monotheisms. Islam, Mosaic faith, and Christianity¹ tell us in Genesis 6 about Noe and the Ark, and almost all religions carry the

¹ *The city of Al-Quds, Yerushalayim, Jerusalem is common to all three monotheisms as a holy place*



heritage of a devastating global event – maybe a swarm of meteorites. Experts date it to about 8.000 before Christ. We can expect a similar catastrophe – this time human-made - already before twenty-one-thousand.

We are the only species capable of destroying our Earth; let us join efforts so that we do not

need another ark. I am delighted that the One Health Commission (OHC) also gets an award today.

Finally, I am obliged to Prof's Luis Eugenio de Souza and Walter Ricciardi for the opportunity to address this honourable assembly - Thank you all!

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