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Health  
Organization**



**World Health  
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**REMARKS BY DR. JEAN PATRICK ALFRED UPON RECEIVING THE PAHO AWARD  
FOR HEALTH SERVICES MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP 2024**

**1 October 2024**

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is with deep gratitude and immense pride that I am here before you today, honored to receive the PAHO Award for Health Services Management and Leadership 2024. This award recognizes the hard work and daily struggle for social justice and human dignity, a struggle in the service of the health of our peoples, at the national, subregional, regional, and global levels. It is the struggle of all those who work day after day for a fairer, more humane health system.

As I receive this award, I feel a special emotion thinking of Haiti, the land of freedom: Haiti, a country that resists, that fights on, and despite the titanic challenges it faces, rises again and again. This award reminds me of the huge obstacles we continue to overcome, but also of the progress and victories we have fought so hard to achieve for the emancipation of all humanity.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to the ministers of health who believed in me, and to the PAHO Executive Committee for recognizing the work done in this part of my life. I am honored to join the ranks of 46 illustrious health professionals who, since 1969, have forged the path to health in our Region. I share this award with all those who have helped build a better future, and I dedicate it to all those who have watched me grow and supported me through good times and bad.

I would like to pay tribute to the Studies and Programming team at Haiti's Ministry of Public Health and Population, and to other colleagues at the Ministry. This award recognizes their hard work and unflinching commitment. It is also an incentive to continue our struggle with the same fervor and with the same rigor.

We have come this far together. Great leaders are not those who dominate or crush others, but those who feed off collective intelligence, who know how to listen and how to learn, and who invest themselves seriously in taking action. True leadership is knowing how to bring together the brightest minds, ask the right questions, and give everyone the opportunity to flourish and contribute to a common cause.

Our collective struggles for a more resilient, people-centered health system are at the heart of my work. The 2012 Haitian National Health Policy, with its vision for 2030, is an example of what we can achieve together. This vision has guided the development and implementation of the Master Plan for Health 2012–2022, whose approach to primary care has strengthened the health system, making it more resilient because it is people-centered.

In our private and professional lives we must question ourselves and learn to reflect on the path we have taken, honestly and courageously analyzing it and asking ourselves: What would I do differently? What would I change if I had to do it all over again? This is wisdom.

To better respond to the challenges of our times, the Master Plan for Health has been evaluated and a second version has been developed for 2021–2031, structured around six fundamental pillars of health systems: service delivery, financing, health information systems, human resources for health, essential medical products and technologies, and leadership and governance.

I would like to thank everyone who has accompanied me on this journey: my family, friends, and colleagues, and our national, subregional, regional, and international partners. Your commitment is truly the driving force behind our struggle to save human lives.

I would also like to thank the members of the Haitian delegation, and especially the Minister of Health, who is here today. I am also grateful to my fellow chief medical officers in the Caribbean and my counterparts in the Region, who continue to teach me how to be a good public servant.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are gathered here with a common goal: defending the health of our peoples against all adversity. Since 1902, the Pan American Health Organization has carried the flame of solidarity in the quest to save lives. Never in our recent history has health been so crucial to the future of humanity.

But this award is not an end in itself. It marks a milestone. My experience has taught me that results come only through justice, fairness, and a profound respect for human dignity. Success in health requires rigorous management and leadership that puts people first. You don't have to be perfect, but you do have to be fair when making decisions.

Urgent action is needed to strengthen our national health systems by anchoring them in a primary healthcare strategy that addresses the needs of the most vulnerable. This is how we will be able to face future pandemics and build a safer future for our children.

Ladies and gentlemen,

These are critical times. We face colossal challenges, not only in terms of health, but also with regard to the social, economic and environmental determinants that influence our well-being. In the face of these challenges, we need productive leadership: leadership that does not waver and does not back down.

I invite you to renew our collective commitment. Let us commit ourselves to writing global health in capital letters, because this is about the future of our peoples. Prevention, preparedness, and response to health challenges can only succeed if we tackle glaring inequalities and ensure equitable, universal access to health care.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am feeling many emotions today. I am proud to be an authentic product of the Republic of Haiti, a country that suffers but fights on and will rise again. Today, I appeal to your support and solidarity. Despite our apparent differences, we must move forward together in order to see the triumph of health equity, social justice, and universal health for all.

In conclusion, I am proud to be one of you. Thank you for welcoming me into your ranks. Thank you again, and God bless all!

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