



# Norwegian Forum for Global Health Research

## **Minutes of General Assembly 2023**

13 June 2023 13:00-14:00 on Zoom meeting

### **1) Welcome**

Chair of the board of Norwegian Forum for Global Health Research, Jon Øyvind Odland welcomed the participants.

### **2) Appointment of Chair for the meeting**

Nils Gunnar Songstad was appointed.

### **3) Appointment of tellers**

Gunhild Koldal, Anne Berit Kolmannskog and Elin Yli Dvergsdal have been appointed as tellers for the election process.

### **4) Approval of the agenda**

The agenda item "Work on new scholarship scheme for international students" was proposed by Bente E. Moen and added to the agenda.  
The updated agenda was then approved by the attendees.

### **5) Approval of minutes from General Assembly 24 November 2022 (hosted at OsloMet and online)**

Minutes were approved.

### **6) Norwegian Forum for Global Health Research 2022; activities and finances**

Jon Øyvind Odland presented an overview of the activities and financial status of the Forum in 2022. The Forum organized one physical meeting in Bergen in May 2022, along with seven digital meetings held on Zoom throughout the year. The last General Assembly took place in November 2022, with a combination of in-person participants in Oslo and online attendance. The Forum successfully organized the Global Health Norway annual conference in 2022, focusing on the theme of "Climate change and global health with an emphasis on working and living conditions."

As of the General Assembly in 2023, the Forum has 350 members. Communication with members primarily occurs through email.

In terms of finances, the economic management of the Forum was transferred from UiB to NTNU in 2022, with a surplus of 66,306 NOK being transferred. Forum received 75,000 NOK from Global Health Norway in 2022. In 2022, the Forum's expenses primarily included transportation and accommodation costs for the physical meetings

in Bergen and Oslo, as well as organizing the annual conference. There is a surplus of 59,904 NOK from 2022 that will be allocated for use in 2023.

In 2023, Forum received 75,000 NOK from Global Health Norway. Jon Øyvind Odland highlighted the need for funding to cover the membership fee for the Federation of European Societies of Tropical Medicine and International Health (FESTMIH). Additionally, Forum plans to hold a Symposium during the European Congress on Tropical Medicine and International Health (ECTMIH) conference in Utrecht in 2023. Budget allocations have been made for travel, accommodation for this symposium and physical meetings of Forum board members. Forum also intends to provide support to the Norwegian Research School of Global Health (NRS GH) for their conference expenses.

Following the presentation and discussion, it was suggested that the leader of the Forum board should serve as the representative of Norway on the FESTMIH board if needed.

Elin Yli Dvergsdal expressed concerns about the high membership fee paid to FESTMIH, noting the Forum's limited involvement in the FESTMIH board. It was suggested that the Forum board engage in a dialogue with the FESTMIH board to negotiate the membership fee. The task of following up on the FESTMIH membership fee was assigned to the new board.

The report/presentation was approved by the attendees of the General Assembly.

#### **7) Forum activities 2023**

The Forum and the NRS GH will be organizing a symposium during ECTMIH 2023 in Utrecht. The symposium's topic will focus on "Environmental toxins and Child Health impact in a global context-Why Planetary Health risk analysis is necessary?"

Muhammad Asaduzzaman provided information that the symposium is scheduled to take place from 3:30 pm to 5:00 pm on 22 November.

#### **8) Global Health Norway and Norwegian Forum for Global Health Research**

Jon Øyvind Odland introduced the similarities and differences between Global Health Norway and Forum. The focus was primarily on the aims and types of membership offered by each organization (institutional vs individual). Forum also holds an observer position on the board of Global Health Norway and receives financial support of 75,000 NOK from Global Health Norway per year, which contributes to sustain the Forum's activities.

Elin Yli Dvergsdal mentioned that the NRS GH is reaching the end of its funding support. Despite this, NRS GH aims to maintain its role as a network for PhD student and young researchers, with a potentially transformation into a "Young Investigator Network." The NRS GH expressed an interest to establish connections and collaborate with the Forum. Several potential activities were discussed, including organizing webinars and disseminating information about ongoing activities.

During the discussion, it was agreed upon that the new board would take responsibility for following up on these activities and maintaining the network in collaboration with the Norwegian Research School of Global Health.

#### **9) Work on new scholarship scheme for international students from countries outside EU/EEA and Switzerland**

From the autumn semester of 2023 full degree students from countries outside the EU/EEA and Switzerland must pay tuition fees. Bente E. Moen provided an update on work on developing a scholarship system for these students. She explained that The Ministry of Education and Research has assigned the Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills to the task of checking scholarship models in other Scandinavian countries and suggesting potential models for implementation in Norway.

Bente E. Moen informed the attendees that there are various scholarship models have been discussed during the meeting with Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills, including those covering tuition fees only, those encompassing both tuition fees and living expenses, and models that providing scholarships to individuals from other countries who bring valuable skills to Norway.

Bente E. Moen highlighted the importance of institutions and their staff making themselves visible and actively supporting students from low-middle-income countries. It was discussed that the Forum could collaborate with other organizations to address this significant issue.

In conclusion, it was agreed that the upcoming Forum board should approach the scholarship task seriously and actively contribute to the necessary changes.

#### **10) Election**

The members of the election committee were absent from the meeting. The candidates for the board election introduced themselves at the meeting. The election process for board members was conducted using a Skjemaker form, which facilitated easy registration of votes. The results were then verified by three vote tellers.

##### **Election of nine board members 2023-2025**

During the presentation of candidates, Stine Hellum Braathen informed the attendees that Arne Henning Eide had did not stand for the election as a board member. Bente E. Moen suggested Thorkild Tylleskär as a candidate for the Forum board. Ultimately, a total of 15 candidates stood for election. In the first round of voting, nine members were elected, and the results were conclusive. The following were elected (in alphabetical order):

- Kjersti Mørkrid Blom-Bakke (Researcher, FHI) 19
- Stine Hellum Braathen (Research Manager, SINTEF Digital) 19
- Markus Roos Breines (Researcher, Fafo Institute) 16
- Hans Hadders (Associate Professor, NTNU) 18
- Berit Mortensen (Associate Professor, Oslo Metropolitan University) 16
- Ingvild Hersoug Nedberg (Associate Professor, UiT) 16

- Maria Lisa Odland (Postdoctoral Fellow, NTNU) 20
- Thorkild Tylleskär (Professor, UiB) 23
- Turid Wæhler (Senior Advisor, Lovisenberg diakonale Høyskole) 17

#### **Election of five substitute board members 2023-2025**

Six candidates stood for election of substitute. The General Assembly did not suggest additional candidates. One round of voting concluded the members of substitute:

- Inger Aakre (Associate Professor, Institute of Marine Research and UiB) 20
- Peter Hangoma (Researcher, UiB and Chr. Michelsen Institute) 21
- Melf-Jakob Kühl (PhD Candidate, UiB) 18
- Gunilla Kulla (Associate Professor, HVL) 19
- Eleni Zoumpoulia Papadopoulou (Researcher, FHI) 23

Thorkild Tylleskär had been proposed as a candidate for the election committee. Because he was elected as a board member, the General Assembly suggested changes to the initial suggestions put forth by the election committee. Dawit Shawel Abebe suggested that Jon Øyvind Odland become a member of the election committee. Elin Yli Dvergsdal proposed Arne Henning Eide as the deputy of the election committee.

The election committee and substitute list are as follows:

#### **Election committee 2023-2025**

- Jon Øyvind Odland, Professor - NTNU
- Ann-Katrin Stensdotter, Professor - NTNU
- Johanne Sundby, Professor - UiO

#### **Substitute election committee**

- Arne Henning Eide, Chief Scientist, SINTEF Digital
- Bente Moen, Professor – UiB
- Suraj Thapa, Associate Professor - UiO

The Election committee and substitutes of election committee were elected unopposed.

Minutes taken by Shanshan Xu