Attn: Global COVID-19 Summit: Ending the Pandemic and Building Back Better to take place at the UNGA on September 22nd

On behalf of Women in Global Health, we applaud the efforts of the United States Government and global leaders to take concrete actions on ending the Pandemic and Building Back Better. We support these shared goals to vaccinate the world, save lives now and build back better.

Women - as 70% of health workers- have made an extraordinary contribution on the frontlines of this pandemic. Yet even in normal times, women hold only 25% decision making roles in health and this pattern has been repeated in the pandemic. Women are the experts in the health systems but they are clustered into lower paid and unpaid, lower status jobs, frequently in unsafe working conditions and subject to sexual harassment.

The world has a projected global shortage of 40 million health workers, with 18 million needed to achieve UHC in the most vulnerable countries. 18 months into this pandemic health workers are traumatized and exhausted. All over the world health workers are planning to leave the profession, particularly women who have shouldered the burden of the pandemic at work and unpaid care work at home. Without women health systems will collapse.

The world cannot go back to business and gender inequality as usual after this pandemic.

So we at Women in Global Health commit to continue advocating for a new, gender equal social contract for Women in the health and care sector. Women want the means - decent work, safety, dignity, fair pay and equal leadership - to do their jobs better and deliver stronger health outcomes for everyone. That new social contract will form the solid foundation for vaccinating the world, saving lives now and building back better and achieving global health security.

Dr. Roopa Dhatt  
Executive Director and Co-Founder (A practicing physician)  
Women in Global Health