

UNITE ANNUAL REPORT 2023

UNIT&
Parliamentarians Network
for Global Health 

THANK YOU

As we conclude another year, UNITE extends heartfelt appreciation to all parliamentarians dedicated to advancing the health and well-being of their citizens. Despite demanding schedules, these leaders consistently commit to a unified global health agenda, a dedication that is vital to UNITE's work. The Secretariat is grateful to collaborate with such a dynamic group of health champions, who bring forward innovative ideas, initiatives, and a powerful commitment to serving their communities.

We recognize the leadership of our Board Members, Hon. Gisela Scaglia (Argentina), Hon. Mariam Jashi (Georgia), Hon. Andrew Ullmann (Germany), Hon. Akua Dansua (Ghana), Hon. Amar Patnaik (India), Hon. Esther Passaris (Kenya), Hon. Ibtissame Azzaoui (Morocco), Hon. Pia Cayetano (The Philippines), and our President, Hon. Ricardo Baptista Leite, MD, MP. Their guidance and support have been invaluable in advancing UNITE's current strategic plan and in contributing meaningfully throughout this impactful year.

Our deep gratitude also goes to all partners and organizations, especially our funders, whose support and collaboration have been instrumental in expanding UNITE's reach and strengthening its measurable global impact. Special thanks to our civil society partners, who play a crucial role in furthering UNITE's mission.

Finally, we extend our appreciation to frontline and community health workers worldwide for their tireless commitment to ensuring equitable, high-quality healthcare for all. Your dedication is inspiring.

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01

**Message of the
President of the
Board**

Dear Members and Stakeholders,

As we usher into 2024, I want to extend my gratitude for your commitment to our shared mission in Global Health. While the past year presented unprecedented challenges globally, resilience and dedication of the main actors in Global Health have been nothing short of inspiring.

In the face of a challenging political landscape, our collective efforts have not only weathered the storm but have laid the foundation for a brighter future for Global Health. As we navigate the complexities, this year we have UNITE's Global Health Summit in partnership with the World Health Summit in Berlin where we should address pressing issues, and where your steadfast support remains our greatest asset.

The political context surrounding us demands courage, innovation, and collaboration. We are confronted with obstacles that require us to rise above, UNITE in our pursuit of positive change in Global Health. It is precisely during these testing times that the true strength of our network of parliamentarians shines and through which we can work for the wellbeing of all citizens, everywhere.

I am optimistic about the enormous potential this year holds for our members and stakeholders. The opportunities for growth, collaboration, and innovation are vast, and I am confident that our collective efforts will yield remarkable results.

Thank you for being an integral part of our community and network. Wishing you a year filled with resilience, progress, and shared triumphs.

For the sick. For the healthy. For all those who parliamentarians represent. It's time to UNITE.

Thank you,

It's time to UNITE!



Ricardo Baptista Leite, MD



02

**Mission, vision,
and values**

MISSION

UNITE is a non-profit, non-partisan, global network of current and former members of parliament from multinational, national, state, and regional Parliaments, Congresses, and Senates, committed towards the promotion of evidence-based and sustainable policies for improved global health systems, in alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

UNITE's policy priorities focus on three cross-cutting areas, namely, human rights and equitable access to health, health systems strengthening, and global health architecture and security, placing UNITE as the only network of parliamentarians from around the world currently focusing on the global health agenda.

VISION

UNITE's vision is to enable:

- Members of Parliaments, Congresses, and Senates, to advocate and drive change at national, regional, and global level, towards the promotion of efficient and sustainable policies for improved global health systems.
- Mutual dialogue, cooperation and learning across the global network to raise global health in the political agenda and enable members to respond and adapt to the main challenges of today and tomorrow.
- Partnerships across the global health sector to maximize UNITE members' impact, in alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

VALUES

INSPIRE parliamentarians, community, and civil society representatives, affected populations, researchers, academia, government officials, and all relevant stakeholders, to act and take part in the global advocacy efforts towards promoting efficient and sustainable policies for improved global health systems.

CONNECT parliamentarians with community and civil society representatives, affected populations, researchers, academia, government officials, and all relevant stakeholders, to maximize advocacy impact towards promoting efficient and sustainable policies for improved global health systems.

EMPOWER parliamentarians, community, and civil society representatives, affected populations, researchers, academia, government officials, and all relevant stakeholders, to enable all actors and give them the right advocacy tools to act towards promoting efficient and sustainable policies for improved global health systems.

UNITE Parliamentarians Network for Global Health rejects all forms of violation of human rights, stigma, and discrimination.



03

**A year
in figures**

Over the past year, UNITE has grown its membership rapidly to:



450 MEMBERS

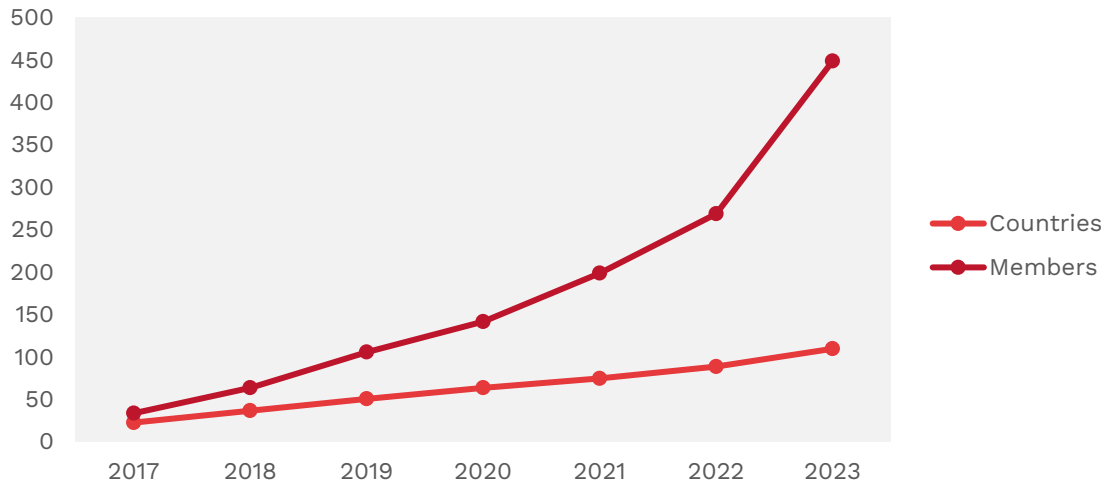
(+67% since January 2023)



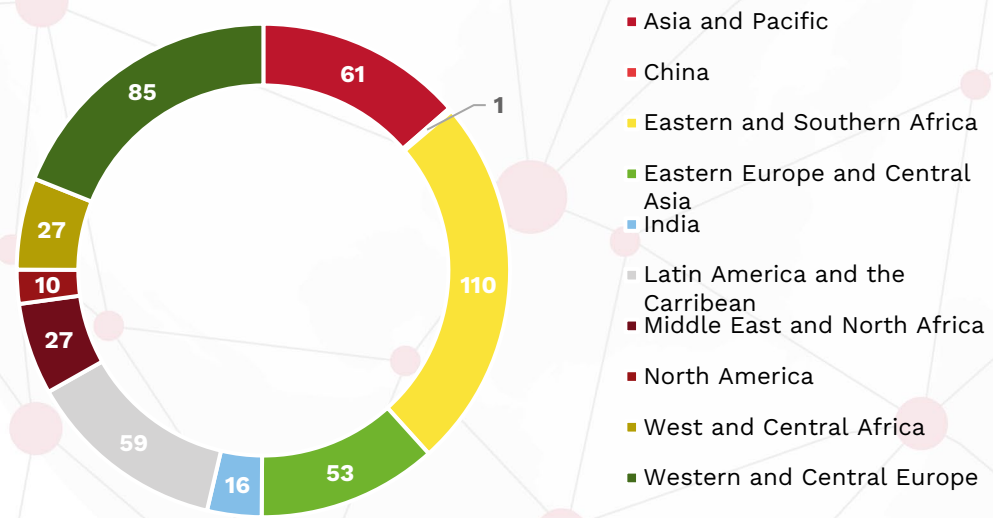
IN 110 COUNTRIES

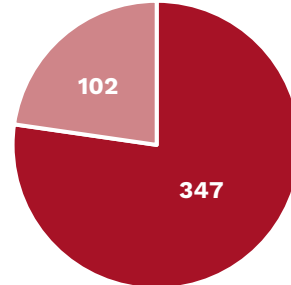
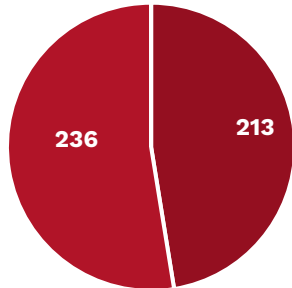
(+25% since January 2023)

UNITE MP Network growth since its creation



The UNITE MP Network





- Female
- Male
- Non-Binary
- Prefer not to say
- Current
- Former

- Network in 2022
- Network expansion in 2023

Note: The boundaries used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by UNITE.

At the end of 2023, UNITE was represented in Algeria, Azerbaijan, Brunei, Cambodia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Federated States of Micronesia, Haiti, Iceland, Iraq, Kuwait, Latvia, Libya, Montenegro, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Puerto Rico, Thailand, The Gambia, Togo, Türkiye, and Venezuela.

We have seen exponential growth of the network within the last months, due to the multiplication of events and partnerships built at the national and international level.

UNITE's impact at global, national, and regional level

AT GLOBAL LEVEL



Connecting **+100 Partners and CSOs** with **MPs** from all regions



Providing **inputs** as a **relevant stakeholder** in the negotiation process of the **Pandemic Accord**



Increased **participation of MPs** in **global fora** (WHS, WHA, spring meetings, UNHLMs)



5+ members of UNITE delivered **statements** at the **MSHs and HLMs on health** in **2023**

AT NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL



Members of UNITE sponsored or co-wrote **5 bill proposals** in the field of **Drug Policy & Infectious Diseases**



Developing and supporting **Digital Health political action plans** in **3 countries**



Supporting the creation of the **Global Health Subcommittee** in **Portugal**



04

**2023
highlights**

Launch of the Global Health Subcommittee at the Portuguese Parliament



At the beginning of the year, and following a proposal led by Hon. Ricardo Baptista Leite (UNITE's President and Founder) and his party, the Health Commission of the Portuguese Parliament created a Global Health Subcommittee. The creation of the Portuguese Global Health Subcommittee was supported by UNITE, which sees tremendous amount of potential in these groups and their members as champions of global health. UNITE aims to support the creation of more such groups in other Parliaments around the world, as they are more equipped to understand and discuss the intersections between health, foreign affairs and finances, which characterize global health issues, than the wider health committees. The Portuguese Subcommittee started by defining its action plan for the months ahead, which focused on hearings of national and international health experts, healthcare professionals and patients from various topics (e.g., drug policy, obesity, climate health etc.), members of the European Parliament, field trips to relevant global health stakeholders and funders, and the organization of a Conference on Access to Vaccination. UNITE was a strong supporter of the activities of the Global Health Subcommittee throughout its mandate.

UNITE's President speaks at the World Economic Forum on the Future of Health

Hon. Ricardo Baptista Leite was [one of the panelists at a World Economic Forum session](#), where he emphasized the need to shift from disease-centric systems to models focused on health outcomes and improving quality of life.

UNITE and the World Health Organization (WHO) meet to discuss the workplan for the year

Following the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the World Health Organization in October 2022, both organizations met in Geneva. These meetings aimed to outline the 2023 workplan, focused on the 3 priority areas defined by the MoU - Equitable access to Health, with a focus on adequate budget allocation for Universal Health Coverage; Sustainable financing for Health Systems Strengthening; and Strengthening the Global Health Security architecture.

UNITE and the UK All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Drug Policy Reform organize a discussion on the policy interventions to reduce drug-related harm, particularly regarding cannabis.

As part of UNITE's efforts to promote the signing of the Pandemic Treaty, Hon. Andrew Ullmann, UNITE's Chapter Chair for Western & Central Europe, **& Indre Karciauskaite, AHF**, publish an [article](#) on the negotiation process of the Pandemic Treaty.

The UNITE Digital Health Hub attends the II Financial Express Digital Health Conclave on 'Mapping The Future of Healthcare', in New Delhi.

Launch of the 4th episode of the '5 Questions With' Podcast on '[Where are we in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals?](#)', with Hon. Ricardo Baptista Leite.

FEBRUARY

UNITE releases the Global Summit 2022 Report and Declaration of Intent



The [UNITE Global Summit 2022 report](#), highlighting the discussions of our flagship three-day event, was published along with the commitments from parliamentarians who endorsed the [Summit's Declaration of Intent](#).

Parliamentarians from Latin America exchange experiences on Mental Health legislation

Hon. María José Plaza, Ecuador, requested support from UNITE to create a Mental Health Legislation, with specific laws and budget. UNITE connected her with Hon. Saraí Núñez Cerón, Mexico, and Hon. Gisela Scaglia, Argentina, who provided Hon. Plaza with technical and material support on [mental health legislation](#).

UNITE members give their input on the Draft Action Agenda of UHC2030

UNITE and UHC2030 organised a focus group discussion where 12 parliamentarians from 11 different countries commented on 3 sets of actions, based on the draft action agenda of UHC2030 (AA1: *Champion Political leadership for UHC*; AA3: *Adopt Enabling Laws and Regulations* and AA8: *Connect UHC and Health Security*). The outcomes from the discussion were incorporated into the draft Action Agenda of UHC2030.

Launch of the 5th and final episode of the ‘5 Questions With’ Podcast on [‘Health as a Human Right’](#), with Hon. Gabriela Cuevas.

UNITE signs a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Campaigns in Global Health (CGH) at the Portuguese Parliament, through which CGH will provide UNITE with strategic guidance and support for parliamentary engagement.

MARCH

UNITE participates in the 146th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in Bahrain and its related meetings after obtaining a permanent observer status



While there, UNITE’s President & Founder Hon. Ricardo Baptista Leite delivered a [speech to the Assembly](#), urging parliamentarians to advocate for Universal Health Coverage (UHC) at global and national level, as well as supporting the upcoming ratification process of the Pandemic Accord.. Still during the IPU Assembly, UNITE attended the side-event ‘Leveraging the role of parliamentarians to progress towards UHC’, highlighting ‘practical opportunities for parliaments to take action at the country level to support progress towards UHC, with a focus on key areas of law-making; financing (including health taxes); accountability, and prioritizing the health needs of women, children and adolescents. The WHO and the IPU launched a new [handbook for parliamentarians on UHC](#), which provides parliamentarians with tools and approaches to help operationalize UHC in their countries, as well as successful approaches used by other countries.

The Informal Working Group on HIV at the European Parliament meet in person for the first time

Having established the group in 2022, UNITE and the International AIDS Society (IAS) [hosted an event at the European Parliament](#), attended by 7 Members of the European Parliament as well as civil society organizations (CSOs). The meeting aimed to identify key issues related to an effective response to the HIV epidemic which could be addressed at the European level through existing initiatives for European health policy frameworks, as well as to define a roadmap for parliamentary action to integrate HIV in other health discussions at the European level.

UNITE is represented at the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in Vienna

The 66th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs focused on aligning human rights with drug policy commitments globally. UNITE member Hon. Seth Kwame Acheampong led Ghana's delegation, [conveyed UNITE's positioning](#) when emphasizing his country's commitment to a human rights and public health approach to drug policy, acknowledged by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. Hon. Acheampong called for tailored, people-centred policy solutions, based on science and that involved all stakeholders.

UNITE is represented at the 17th Plenary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM) in Rabat by [Hon. Ibtissame Azzaoui](#), UNITE Chapter Chair for Middle East and North Africa.

UNITE hosts the first session of the 'Diálogos de la pospandemia', an online series of capacity building webinars for the LATAM region. The session focused on [Mental Health](#), building on the activities in Ecuador.

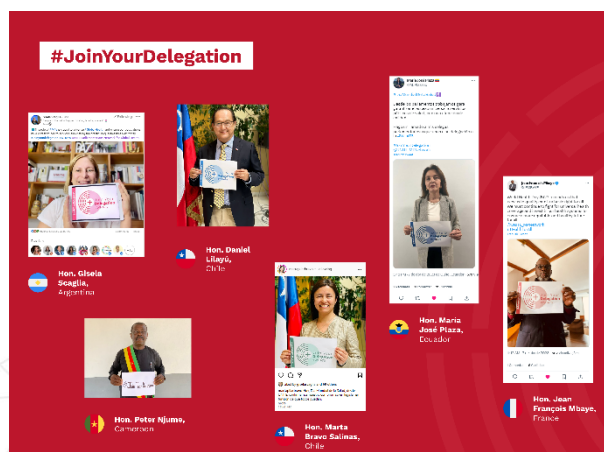
UNITE celebrates women parliamentarians on International Women's Day 2023 by inviting [3 women parliamentarians](#) of the network to share their achievements in Parliament related to health.

The UNITE Global Board gathers online for its first meeting of the year

UNITE supports Hon. Éctor Jaime Ramírez Barba's intervention in an event by the World Hepatitis Alliance to share [Mexico's advances](#) towards the 2025 interim targets of WHO's Global Health Sector Strategy on HIV, viral hepatitis, and sexually transmitted infections (STIs)

The UNITE Global Board publishes a Special Address on the [Türkiye and Syria Earthquakes](#) ('Emergency Aid Needs to Reach All').

UNITE launches the first 'Join Your Delegation' Campaign to promote Parliamentary attendance at the World Health Assembly (WHA)



UNITE launched the 'Join Your Delegation' campaign on World Health Day, to encourage parliamentarians to advocate for their inclusion in their respective country's delegation at the 76th World Health Assembly (WHA).

The WHA is the decision-making body of the WHO. It is attended by delegations from all WHO member states, and focuses on determining the policies of the organization, reviewing proposed budgets, and supervising financial policies. Parliamentarians' involvement in international health forums and discussions at the highest political levels - such as the WHA - is vital to advancing global health. By joining their national delegation, parliamentarians can bring attention to national health priorities and strengthen their country's position in international health policy discussions.

Taking this into account, UNITE developed a toolkit with concrete actions for parliamentarians, who shared on social media their perspectives on why it is crucial for them to join their delegations at the WHA. UNITE is also encouraging and supporting its members to write letters addressed to their respective governments.

UNITE will continue using the 'Join Your Delegation' Campaign to highlight the importance of Parliamentarians' active participation in high-level global health events and to be able to join and influence their national delegations, thus making a significant contribution to global health governance, promoting accountability, and strengthening national health systems.

UNITE attends the Spring Meetings of the World Bank Group (WBG) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Health Summit Regional meeting in Washington D.C., USA

UNITE sent a delegation led by Hon. Ricardo Baptista Leite, UNITE President & Founder, Hon. Akua Sena Dansua, UNITE Chapter Chair for Western & Central Africa, and Hon. Andrew Ullmann (UNITE Chapter Chair for Western and Central Europe) to Washington D.C., United States of America. During the two days of the 2023 Global Parliamentary Forum (GPF), which takes place at the margins of the Spring Meetings of the WBG and

the IMF, UNITE organised a session on [‘Financing Preparedness for Global Crises’](#) together with the Parliamentary Network on The World Bank & IMF. During the session, Hon. Ricardo Baptista Leite (Portugal) and Hon. Akua Sena Dansua (Ghana) shared their vision on the way forward to ensure effective commitments from Member States to global funding mechanisms with a special focus on preparedness in a context of multiple ongoing crises. Additionally, UNITE members Hon. Neema Lugangira (Tanzania) and Hon. Amira Saber (Egypt) also participated as speakers in other GPF sessions.

Launch of the UNITE Fellowship Program

During the week in Washington D.C., UNITE and the Virchow Foundation for Global Health also hosted a joint panel discussion on the need for effective partnerships between policymakers and academics, where UNITE [launched its Fellowship Program](#). The UNITE Fellowship Program intends to create a network of Fellows who will become crucial actors in the process of gathering and developing scientific evidence, capacitating policymakers to develop well-sustained policies.

UNITE participates in the Harm Reduction International (HRI) Conference 2023 in Melbourne/Australia

UNITE supported the participation of Hon. Esther Passaris (Kenya), Chapter Chair for Eastern and Southern Africa, and Hon. Fiona Patten (Australia) in a high-level panel of a side meeting, discussing obstacles that elected officials face when addressing Drug Policy, and what strategies can be employed among legislators to effect change. Additionally, UNITE also invited Hon. Passaris and Hon. Sabina Chege (Kenya) to speak at another side-event focusing on Drug Policy reform and the implementation of Harm Reduction programs across Africa. They provided perspectives on political leadership in Harm Reduction and discussing tackling barriers in access to health and rights for people who use drugs.

UNITE organises a virtual information session through the International Forum on Global Health, focusing on the UHC Action Agenda and UN High-Level meetings engagements

The UNITE Digital Health Hub attends the PATH Conference on Digital Health in New Delhi

UNITE organises the second session of the [‘Diálogos de la pospandemia’](#), which focused on harm reduction policies in Latin America

Ecuador approves its First Mental Health Law



Following the work UNITE had supported since the beginning of 2023 with Hon. María José Plaza, the proposal for [Ecuador's first Mental Health Law was approved](#). The law focuses on enabling prevention, but also the provision of comprehensive care for people living with mental health challenges. Hon. María José Plaza recognizes that will face many implementation difficulties and will require multisectoral coordination, but is fully committed to its objectives and to promote the Law both at national and international level. UNITE remains available as well to provide support however possible, including by promoting collaboration with relevant partners and stakeholders. UNITE supported the creation of the bill by setting up and enabling a series of interactions between Hon. Plaza and other UNITE members from Latin America who already had previous experience working with mental health legislative proposals and other related issues. The group discussed the multiple contexts and existing mental health legislation across the region, but, above all, it was able to accompany the drafting of the Ecuadorian proposal and provide input to enhance the draft bill, as well as to share insights on potential political challenges and other advices that helped facilitate the approval process in Ecuador. This peer-to-peer interaction and sharing of expertise is key to UNITE's mission and vision.

UNITE attends the Multistakeholder Hearings on Universal Health Coverage (UHC), Tuberculosis (TB) and Pandemic Prevention Preparedness and Response (PPPR) in New York City

A UNITE delegation composed of Hon. Ricardo Baptista Leite from Portugal, and Hon. Neema Lugangira from Tanzania, as well as members from the UNITE Secretariat, attended the multistakeholder hearings in New York City at the United Nations Headquarters. The multistakeholder hearings on TB, UHC and PPPR were organised in preparation for the September 2023 United Nations High-Level Meetings on Health. Hon. Ricardo Baptista Leite, Founder and President of UNITE, was chosen as a panelist in the context of the multistakeholder hearing on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response where he made a [statement on behalf of the network](#), representing the voices of parliamentarians across the world, on the importance of investing and keeping sustainable financing for PPPR.

Hon. [Neema Lugangira](#) took the floor during the three hearings on TB, UHC and PPPR and advocated for better representation of Parliamentarians in the conversations of Global Health, as their role is essential to ensure accountability and implementation of the ambitious commitments made at the UN level and to ensure their translation into effective national health policies.

Finally, the UNITE delegation also met with permanent representations to the UN to advocate for the involvement of all stakeholders in UN processes and ask for a higher commitment to meet the SDG targets before 2030.

UNITE holds its in-person Regional Meeting in Georgia

UNITE organised its second in-person UNITE Regional Meeting, this time gathering parliamentarians from the Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) region in-person. UNITE members gathered with government representatives, technical experts, academia and Civil Society representatives in Tbilisi, Georgia, to discuss the gaps and challenges to be addressed at regional and national level. For the first two days of the event, discussions focused mainly on Sustainable Financing following the decision taken by Member States at the 75th World Health Assembly in 2022 to improve the WHO's financing model. Parliamentarians from the region agreed on a [Declaration of Intent for the region](#), pledging to support Sustainable Financing to improve access to healthcare for all. On the third and last day, the group visited two institutions - the Center for Mental Health and Prevention of Addiction, which implements state programs related to addiction and psychiatry, providing psychiatric services and social rehabilitation; and the Georgian AIDS and Clinical Immunology Research Center, responsible for combating HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases in Georgia through testing, treatment, and prevention programs.

UNITE participates in the 76th World Health Assembly (WHA) in Geneva

UNITE President, Hon. Ricardo Baptista Leite, alongside UNITE Chapter Chairs, Hon. Pia Cayetano (The Phillipines) and Hon. Mariam Jashi (Georgia), as well as UNITE member Hon. Luis Sambo (Angola), and the UNITE Secretariat were in Geneva for [the 76th World Health Assembly](#). Hon. Ricardo Baptista Leite spoke at an Inter-ministerial Dialogue held on the side of the WHA, co-organised by the Global Commission on Drug Policy and the WHO, and co-sponsored by Switzerland, Colombia and Bolivia. Hon. Pia Cayetano also spoke at an event sharing her work on Tobacco Control as a Public Health intervention. Hon. Pia was also announced as one of the winners of the WHO 2023 World No Tobacco Day Award during the WHA.

UNITE President speaks at the [World Economic Forum Growth Summit 2023](#)

UNITE delegation constituted by Hon. Dinis Ramos, Hon. Miguel Costa Matos, and Rosina Ribeiro Pereira (Portugal), Hon. Esther Passaris (Kenya), Hon. Éctor Jaime Ramírez Barba (Mexico), and Hon. Daniele Molokele (Zimbabwe) attended the Geneva Graduate Institute Executive Course on [‘Current Perspectives on Drug Policy’](#). Hon. Ricardo Baptista Leite (Portugal) and Hon. Morgana Daniele (Lithuania) participated virtually

Hon. Ibtissame Azzaoui, UNITE Chapter Chair for the MENA region, speaks at the 17th World Congress on Public Health on “Advancing the Glocal Public Health Advocacy”

Led by UNITE, 7 Members of the HIV Working Group at the European Parliament (Hon. Frances Fitzgerald, Hon. Sirpa Pietikäinen, Hon. Sara Cerdas, Hon. Cyrus Engerer, Hon. Antoni Comín i Oliveres, Hon. Catharina Rinzema, and Hon. Marc Angel) publish an [op-ed](#) on the importance of investing in research and development for an HIV vaccine

The UNITE Eastern & Southern Africa Chapter members gather for an online regional meeting

UNITE member Hon. Fauzia Khan (India) publishes an [article](#) on the importance of addressing AMR and the roles of the various political levels.

JUNE

UNITE organises an [in-person multistakeholder event](#) in Tanzania on Digital Health



The UNITE Digital Health Policy Hub and the Omuka Hub co-organised a Parliamentary Roundtable, in Dodoma, Tanzania. The event brought together 22 parliamentarians from Tanzania and representatives from the Ministry of Health, experts from the Centre of Excellence on Digital Health, academicians, civil society organizations and youth representatives. Participants discussed various topics such as current and future digital policies in Tanzania, advancing Primary Health Care services and issues related to health data in Digital Health Transformation, among others. At the end of the 2-day conference, UNITE established a Digital Health Multisectoral Group to be chaired by UNITE and the Omuka Hub, with representatives from key stakeholders from different sectors. The group aims at to bridge the gap between decision-makers and experts, developing Digital Transformation strategies to strengthen connected diagnostics, primary healthcare, and UHC in Tanzania.

UNITE and Universidad Austral organises a Course on Global Health for Parliamentarians

UNITE in collaboration with Universidad Austral (Escuela de Política, Gobierno y Relaciones Internacionales) organised a course on the challenges of Global Health from a parliamentary perspective. Participants originated from 6 different countries of Latin America are now better equipped to understand and promote global health issues. The course started in May and comprised seven modules focusing on different topics. The [first class](#) was lectured by UNITE President, Hon. Ricardo Baptista Leite, and UNITE Chapter Chair for the EECA region, Hon. Mariam Jashi, including an introduction to the course and its main themes, and a second part on the critical challenges facing global health. The [second session](#), led by Hon. Gisela Scaglia and Dr. Guillermina Pieroni, delved into the role of parliaments and parliamentarians in shaping public health policy and advancing health agendas. The [third class](#), presented by Hon. Éctor Jaime Ramírez Barba and Hon. Sarai Nuñez Cerón, explored parliamentary diplomacy and inter-parliamentary cooperation in addressing global health challenges.

In the [fourth class](#), Dr. Juan de Dios Cincunegui provided an in-depth analysis of global health security and multilateralism, with special reference to the COVID-19 pandemic. The [fifth session](#), lectured by UNITE Secretariat, examined governance structures and institutional responsibilities in supporting resilient global health systems. Hon. Andrea Álvarez Marín led the [sixth class](#), focusing on the future of global health, human rights, and equitable access to healthcare. Finally, a panel of academics and parliamentarians [concluded the course](#) with a session on global health governance and the roles of international organizations in coordinating health efforts.

UNITE participates in the Global Day of Action ([Stop. Don't Punish Campaign](#))

In support of the 'Stop. Don't Punish Campaign', a global advocacy campaign calling for drug policies based on health and human rights, UNITE organised a variety of different activities to promote the topic. UNITE collected dozens of signatures from its members for a pledge in support of World Drug Day and calling for drug policy reform by prioritizing scientific evidence, Human Rights, and Public Health over punitive measures in regards to Drug Policy. Additionally, UNITE Chapter Chair for Eastern and Southern Africa, Hon. Esther Passaris (Kenya), spoke on NTV Kenya about the Global Day of Action and the Support Don't Punish Campaign. Hon. Daniel Molekele (Zimbabwe) also spoke at a policy dialogue on drug use. Other members of UNITE shared their support to the Campaign, by engaging in the Support. Don't Punish. Photo Project, leaving messages on social media about what this day means to each of them.

The UNITE Global Board provides [input](#) to the Zero Draft Political Declaration on PPPR

UNITE President attends briefing session on the future Pandemic Accord by the European Union Delegation in Geneva

The UNITE Western & Central Africa Chapter meet for an online regional meeting.

UNITE Chapter Chair for India, [Hon. Amar Patnaik](#) and UNITE member from India [Hon. Fauzia Khan](#), publish an article with their perspectives on addressing shortages of blood supplies in the country

UNITE attends the International AIDS Society (IAS) [Global HIV Vaccine Enterprise's](#) roundtable discussion on the need to advocate for increased funding on HIV Vaccine R&D in the European Region

UNITE organises the third session of the [‘Diálogos de la pos pandemia’](#) series, focused on Global Public Investment with the collaboration of the Global Public Investment Network (GPIN)

UNITE and the UNITE Digital Health Hub are presented in the ‘Cambio de Roles 2023’ Program at the National Congress of Argentina

UNITE shares a [video](#) emphasizing the essential role of parliamentarians in Global Health international negotiations, namely, the Pandemic Accord, to mark the International Day Of Parliamentarism

JULY

UNITE supports Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response



In the lead-up to the UN High-Level Meetings (UN HLMs) on health scheduled for September 2023 during the 78th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), UNITE took proactive steps to actively engage with the negotiation of the Pandemic Treaty. Specifically, UNITE's Global Board analyzed and provided comments on the Draft Political Declaration on PPPR. Subsequently, UNITE also organised a webinar aimed at informing the Permanent Missions in New York entitled ‘The role of Parliamentarians in strengthening health systems and enhancing pandemic prevention, preparedness and response (PPPR)’. It was led by UNITE's President and UNITE's Chapter Chairs for the MENA and EECA regions, making the case for why parliamentarians are crucial in said processes. Hon. Ricardo Baptista Leite emphasized that parliamentarians have a unique opportunity to bring together their constituents, permanent representatives, and stakeholders to actively participate in negotiations, including the drafting of crucial political declarations. Hon. Ibtissame Azzaoui, emphasized the importance of accountability in governance and its role in promoting global solidarity. She also stressed how solidarity in health entails sharing resources and expertise to ensure equitable access to healthcare services, medicine, and technologies. Hon. Mariam Jashi focused on the need for sustainable financing and investments in Global Health, covering funding gaps, diverse funding sources, and the role of parliamentarians in securing resources for healthcare. Overall, the webinar provided a unique opportunity to bridge the gap between parliamentarians and Permanent Missions, fostering a

deeper understanding and collaboration in the realm of Global Health and particularly in PPPR.

UNITE and UHC2030 jointly sign a letter calling on all parliamentarians to secure health high on their country's political agenda by guaranteeing that health is legally or constitutionally recognized as a universal human right and by championing the strengthening of national health systems.

UNITE hosts [virtual session](#) 'Let's Talk Health: Empowered Voices: MPs UNITE for Global Health Equality', bringing together parliamentarians from its Asia-Pacific Chapter to discuss the intersection of health policies and the real-life challenges faced by women in the region, reaffirming UNITE's commitment to championing gender-responsive policies and advancing global health equality.

Hon. Peter Njume, UNITE member from Cameroon questions Prime Minister Hon. Joseph Ngute [on UHC and Malnutrition in the country](#)

UNITE participates in the Chatham House conference 'Decision-making in International Health Financing', raising critical questions about the government's strategy and timetable for implementing significant healthcare reforms

UNITE's President speaks at the panel on ['Strengthening health systems: manufacturing and access to vaccines, medicines and health technologies'](#) at the 2023 EurAfrican Forum

UNITE engages in an event organised by YO.DH: Youth Ownership of Digital Health in New Delhi, India, presenting the work of the Hub and engaging in brainstorming sessions on digital health transformation and future imperatives in India

UNITE members Hon. Akaki Zoidze, from Georgia, Hon. Éctor Jaime Ramírez Barba, from Mexico and Hon. Karti Chidambaram from India [marked World Hepatitis Day](#) by showing their commitment to the fight against hepatitis.

UNITE Chapter Chair for Western & Central Europe, Hon. Andrew Ullmann and Marisol Touraine, Chair of the Unitaid Executive Board and former Minister of Health of France, co-write an [article](#) on the importance of cervical cancer prevention and diagnosis

UNITE's President participates in an episode of [INHSU's 'Connecting with care'](#) series, which focuses on Hep C services in Portugal

AUGUST

UNITE members call for action to End Overdose on International Overdose Awareness Day



Hon. Sophia Moermond, from Australia, Hon. Pastor Vera Bejarano, from Paraguay, Hon. Adrian Belii, from Moldova and Hon. Gustavo Rivera, New York State, United States shared statements on International Overdose Awareness Day. UNITE members emphasized challenges posed by stigma, and the potential for Harm Reduction strategies to save lives.

UNITE organises the fourth session of the ‘[Diálogos de la pospandemia](#)’, which focused on priorities and challenges for the digital transformation of healthcare at the national and regional levels in Latin America

UNITE becomes a member of the Global Health Council, the leading member organization devoted to advancing global health priorities by uniting advocates, implementers, policy makers, and other stakeholders.

SEPTEMBER

UNITE participates in the 78th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA 78) in New York, USA



During the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Hon. Ricardo Baptista Leite had the opportunity to represent UNITE's membership and deliver statements at the three High-Level Meetings on Health, i.e., on [Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response \(PPPR\)](#), [Universal Health Coverage \(UHC\)](#) and [Tuberculosis \(TB\)](#).

In his address on PPPR, Hon. Baptista Leite emphasized the importance of preparing healthcare systems and society in general for potential future emergencies. He particularly focused on the need to engage parliamentarians on the discussion around the future Pandemic Accord, as many were unaware of the process.

For the intervention on UHC, UNITE's President highlighted primary care as the cornerstone of healthcare systems, praising them for being communities' first point of contact, and their role in health promotion, disease prevention, and early intervention. He called on parliamentarians to support a primary health care approach that promotes universal access.

Finally, at the last HLM, Hon. Baptista Leite stressed that ending TB is a political decision, not a scientific challenge. He called for the mobilization of both domestic and international funding as well as the implementation of science-based policies to improve access to testing, treatment, and effective preventive measures.

UNITE also co-organised an event with the Global Sepsis Alliance and 6 other partners entitled 'Synergizing Global Actions for Sepsis, AMR, and PPPR for Attaining Health Related SDGs', in which UNITE's President [moderated a panel](#) on the role of policymakers in combating national and global health threats. Moreover, on the side of the UNGA, Hon. Ricardo Baptista Leite also participated in a [session](#) addressing accountability for the future Pandemic Accord, International Health Regulations, and the forthcoming UN Political Declaration on PPPR, organised by the Panel for a Global Public Health Convention.

UNITE co-authors [Transform Health's](#) response to the final draft of the Political Declaration ahead of the UN High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage

While this version of the draft included the recognition of the role of digital health, the response letter urged towards having greater ambitions in recognizing the potential of digital health. It further advocated for the need for increased investments, stronger commitments on health data governance underpinned by equity and rights-based principles and finally, the need for a concrete action to close the divide in digital access which is imperative for equitable access to technology-enabled health services.

UNITE's Digital Health Hub organises its second Steering Committee

UNITE's Digital Health Policy Hub hosted its 2nd Steering Committee Meeting, which focused on 'Essential Requisites for a Digital Health Legislation for Ecuador'. The event supported the development of a new bill on Digital Health Transformation in Ecuador. Building on an existing draft, UNITE promoted knowledge and experience sharing between an Ecuadorian parliamentarian working on a draft proposal and the members of the UNITE Digital Health Hub's Steering Committee (the Steering Committee is constituted by parliamentarians from all around the world and technical experts). This meeting also served to determine a set of key topics that should be included in any Digital Health bill.

Launch of the [UNITE Fellowship Program](#)

After announcing the program earlier in the year, UNITE welcomed the Junior and Senior Fellows who, for the following 10 months, would, on a voluntary basis, help support the capacitation of policymakers towards the development of well-sustained policies, as well as providing an evidence-based foundation for UNITE's policy and advocacy interventions. During the Kick-off meeting, Fellows had the opportunity to learn what will be expected of their participation, and how they will cooperate with the Secretariat and membership throughout the program.

UNITE participates in the WHO Symposium on the Future of Digital Health Systems in the European Region

UNITE member Hon. Adrian Belii participates in the [WHO Global Conference 'Engaging patients for Patient Safety'](#) on World Patient Safety Day 2023, highlighting the key role of Members of Parliament in ensuring that the international human rights agenda is included into national health policies related to patient safety

UNITE participates in the High-Level meeting of the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU in Seville, focusing on HIV

UNITE participates in the Ninth Inter-Parliamentary Union [Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians](#) in Hanoi, Vietnam, on the theme 'The role of youth in accelerating the achievement of the SDGs through digital transformation and innovation'

Launch of the [Policy Brief 'Advancing Youth-Centered Health and Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development.'](#) by YouthRISE and UNITE, ahead of the 2023 SDG Summit

UNITE co-sponsors the conference ['Exposure to Cannabis in Adolescence and Health'](#) at the Portuguese Parliament

UNITE's Digital Health Policy Hub organises an in-person roundtable on 'The future of the parliamentary agenda on digital health' with the Health Observatory of the Law School of the University of Buenos Aires

UNITE organises the first meeting of the Expert Advisory Board of the UNITE Drug Policy Desk

UNITE organises a 'Welcome session' for new UNITE members

Global Health Forum 2023 in Portugal

UNITE organises the fifth session of the ['Diálogos de la pospandemia'](#), which focused on harm reduction, as UNITE members shared experiences and draft legislation from Argentina, Costa Rica and Paraguay

UNITE signs a Memorandum of Understanding with Global Health Advocates

UNITE members Hon. Kelvin Yii moderates a panel on effective interventions towards cervical cancer elimination at the launch event of the ‘Global HPV Consortium’

OCTOBER

UNITE announces the UNITE Global Summit 2024 would take place in collaboration with the World Health Summit, in Berlin



Following multiple years of collaboration between UNITE and the World Health Summit (WHS), including the first pitch for UNITE having been done at the WHS 2016, the two organisations decided to push the boundaries further. The World Health Summit and UNITE will partner to organize the next edition of the UNITE Global Summit (2024) in Berlin. The UNITE Global Summit will be an additional day of the World Health Summit conference – on October 16th, 2024. This sets up the UNITE Global Summit as one of the main global health events of the year, expanding its reach and influence on global health. This additional day will foster a platform for parliamentarians to exchange with experts, private sector, civil society, and other relevant stakeholders, combining the strengths of both the World Health Summit and UNITE’s Global Summit, to guide policymakers into taking action according to the recommendations they have been presented within the previous days.

After a full year of international meetings and conferences on health, the UNITE Global Summit and the WHS thus become the last moment for stakeholders to meet and reflect on both what has been achieved and what is still left. As such, after the technical discussions at the WHS, the UNITE Global Summit will be the ideal opportunity for experts to deliver key messages for policymakers on what it is they need to implement over the next year.

The UNITE Global Summit will focus on the outcomes of the UN HLMs in regard to sustainable financing for health, ensuring government accountability, and equipping parliamentarians to actively engage in upcoming international processes on global

health. The event will count on the participation of multiple UNITE members and partners, including the WHO, the Global Fund and the AIDS Healthcare Foundation, as well as many others.

UNITE participates in the World Health Summit 2023, in Berlin, Germany

Besides attending the WHS 2023 sessions and announcing the collaboration for the UNITE Global Summit 2024, UNITE also organised two side-events at the Bundestag during the WHS. The first was a working breakfast co-organised with Unitaid entitled 'Investing in a Healthier Future: Unlocking Resources for Innovation in Infectious Diseases'. The breakfast was moderated by Hon. Mariam Jashi and included speeches by Dr. Marisol Touraine (Chair of the Board, Unitaid), and Dr. Teodora Elvira C. Wi (WHO). The second was a set of panels looking towards the follow-up of the recent UN High-Level Meetings on UHC, PPPR and TB. The event 'Fostering Sustainable Impact on Health Financing: UN High-Level Meetings on Health and the Way Forward' was moderated by Hon. Ricardo Baptista Leite and included inputs from multiple experts and UNITE partners, including Dr. Christoph Benn (Joep Lang Institute), Dr. Jorge Saavedra (AHF), Dr. Philippe Duneton (Unitaid), Dr. Tessa Edejer (WHO), Gabriela Cuevas (UHC2030), Dianne Stewart (The Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria), and Saul Walker (CEPI).

UNITE organises an in-person event in Kenya to promote and support the proposal of a Harm Reduction Bill in the country

UNITE and VOCAL Kenya organised a discussion for parliamentarians in Nairobi, Kenya on current issues in national drug policies and how a legal framework for harm reduction would standardize, improve, and increase access to harm reduction services, as well as how such policies should be funded. UNITE Chapter Chair for Eastern and Southern Africa and Member of the National Assembly of Kenya, Hon. Esther Passaris, is supporting the National Harm Reduction Bill 2023, working with and empowering communities affected by drug-related issues to actively participate in policy discussions. During the event, several parliamentarians expressed their support for Hon. Passaris' legislative initiative on harm reduction.

UNITE participates in the launch event of the UHC Day 2023 campaign

Ahead of Universal Health Coverage Day (December 12th), UNITE started to engage on the UHC Day 2023 campaign under the banner 'Health for All: Time for Action', emphasizing the urgency of getting progress towards health for all back on track. UNITE and other UHC advocates around the world joined a virtual launch of the UHC Day 2023 campaign featuring two panels on how to translate the Political Declaration from the High-Level Meeting on UHC into concrete actions and progress. While the first panel focused on the state of the UHC movement following the High-Level Meeting, the second panel focused on what UHC Day campaigners can do to support country action.

UNITE hosts its first online MENA regional Chapter Meeting

UNITE attends the International Drug Policy Reform Conference, Phoenix AZ

UNITE participates in the 147th IPU Assembly and related meetings

UNITE was represented at the CND Thematic Discussions, Vienna, Austria

UNITE delivers a class on Digital Health and another on the main concepts and challenges of global health as part of the International Diploma in Parliamentary Diplomacy at Universidad Austral, Argentina

UNITE President publishes an article on ‘The Need for Trust: Artificial intelligence’

UNITE Chapter Chair for Western and Central Europe, Hon. Andrew Ullmann, publishes the article ‘Integrating Global Health among National Strategic priorities: the moment is now’ with Anna Maria Żakowicz, and Indre Karciauskaite, AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF)

NOVEMBER

UNITE holds its in-person Global Board meeting in New Delhi, India



UNITE gathered its Global Board in-person for the second time in its history. It took place in New Delhi, India, between the 17th and the 19th of November 2023. On the first day, UNITE's President and Chapter Chairs participated in parliamentary inquiries with key global health experts and UNITE partners to explore different topics and perspectives within each of UNITE's priority areas – Human Rights and Equitable Access to Health; Strengthening of Health Systems; and Global Health Architecture and Security. They discussed existing gaps, challenges, and opportunities, as well as the key role of parliamentarians and UNITE in supporting advances in global health. The remaining two days were dedicated to internal discussions on UNITE's 2024 workplan, governance, and other topics. The Board also had the opportunity to visit India's

National Public Health Observatory and India's AIDS Healthcare Foundation HIV Clinic, among other activities.

This was also the moment when Hon. Sonia Sidhu was first officially announced as the UNITE Chapter Chair for North America. Hon. Sidhu is particularly dedicated to combating non-communicable diseases, and will surely make significant contributions to UNITE's mission of advancing Global Health policies worldwide.

UNITE holds a Parliamentary Roundtable on Mental Health in Africa

UNITE organised a virtual parliamentary roundtable on mental health in Africa, with the participation of Wellcome Trust, towards understanding the current landscape, fostering collaborative discourse, and enhancing parliamentary competencies through engagement between parliamentarians and researchers and mental health experts.

UNITE launches a [Policy Brief](#) on Digital Health Transformation

UNITE and Transform Health developed a policy brief highlighting the importance of digital health as a prerequisite for achieving health, and wider sustainable development and economic goals and for parliamentarians to become champions for health in the digital age. The digital revolution will be pivotal to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, including Universal Health Coverage (UHC). Digital health promises improved and more equitable access to care, better clinical outcomes and safety, as well as reduced costs. It is crucial that Parliamentarians actively engage to influence their national policies to enable innovation in health and ensure the safe use of health data and inclusive access to digital health technologies for all.

To launch the brief, UNITE and Transform Health organised a webinar during the Digital Health Week highlighting how the Digital Health Transformation can help advance Universal Health Coverage and what Members of Parliament can do to help promote the digital transition.

UNITE organises a global webinar entitled 'The Power of Policy: AMR Legislation and the Impact on Public Health' for the World AMR Awareness Week

As part of the World AMR Awareness Week (18-24 November), UNITE and the WHO organised a dialogue to elucidate parliamentarians on AMR (Antimicrobial Resistance) and their role in tackling this global threat at local, national, and international levels. The dialogue also included a short presentation from the WHO on AMR and its 'One Health Legislative Assessment Tool'. UNITE continued engaging further on the topic of AMR given the upcoming 2024 United Nations General Assembly High-level Meeting on AMR.

UNITE organises an online Parliamentary Dialogue for members of the Western and Central Europe Chapter regarding Cannabis Legislation and Reform

UNITE member and Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Health and Childcare Chairperson, Hon. Fortune Daniel Molokele, delivered opening remarks and led a discussion on improving health and harm reduction services for people who use and

inject drugs, during a drug policy reform workshop organized by the Zimbabwe Civil Liberties and Drug Network.

UNITE attends the [Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum \(APPF 31\)](#) in Manila, The Philippines

UNITE co-organises the in-person event '10 years of European Testing Week - A call to action to end HIV, Hepatitis and STIS in Europe' at the European Parliament

UNITE interviews its member [Hon. Neema Lugangira](#) on the UHC Act that was approved in Tanzania

DECEMBER

UNITE participates in the International Universal Health Coverage Day (UNITE4UHC Campaign)

Ahead of UHC Day (12th December), UNITE supported UHC2030 in organising a virtual session entitled 'Shaping Our Health Future: Young Leaders and Parliamentarians Unite for UHC'. Among the panel of parliamentarians, UNITE members Hon. Ashraf Hatem (Egypt) and Hon. Kayihan Pala (Turkey) answered questions revolving around UHC reforms and perspectives on what is needed to drive action toward UHC in every country, especially in the wake of this year's United Nations High-Level Meeting on UHC.

Additionally, UNITE's President, Hon. Ricardo Baptista Leite, and 8 members of the network from Ecuador, Georgia, Kenya, Moldova, Morocco, Paraguay, and Zimbabwe also engaged in the 'UHC Champions Campaign' by UHC2030. The videos and quotes were published on the UHC Day Campaign X (formerly known as Twitter) and website. UNITE also developed its own social media campaign to engage members throughout the week, with banners and videos being shared across social media channels. There were also quizzes published on social media to test UHC knowledge and for participants to get insights into a broader understanding of the state of healthcare services worldwide, each question reflecting the progress made (or not) in UHC.

UNITE organises the sixth '[Diálogos de la pospandemia](#)', focusing on infectious diseases, as part of the World AIDS Day

On World AIDS Day, UNITE's Latin America and the Caribbean Chapter met virtually for the conclusion of the 2023 'Diálogos de la pospandemia' series. The event focused on infectious diseases, particularly HIV-AIDS, and featured presentations on the legislative experience from various countries in the region, including Argentina, Venezuela, Paraguay, Chile, Mexico, and Honduras. UNITE members were invited to discuss their work in this area.

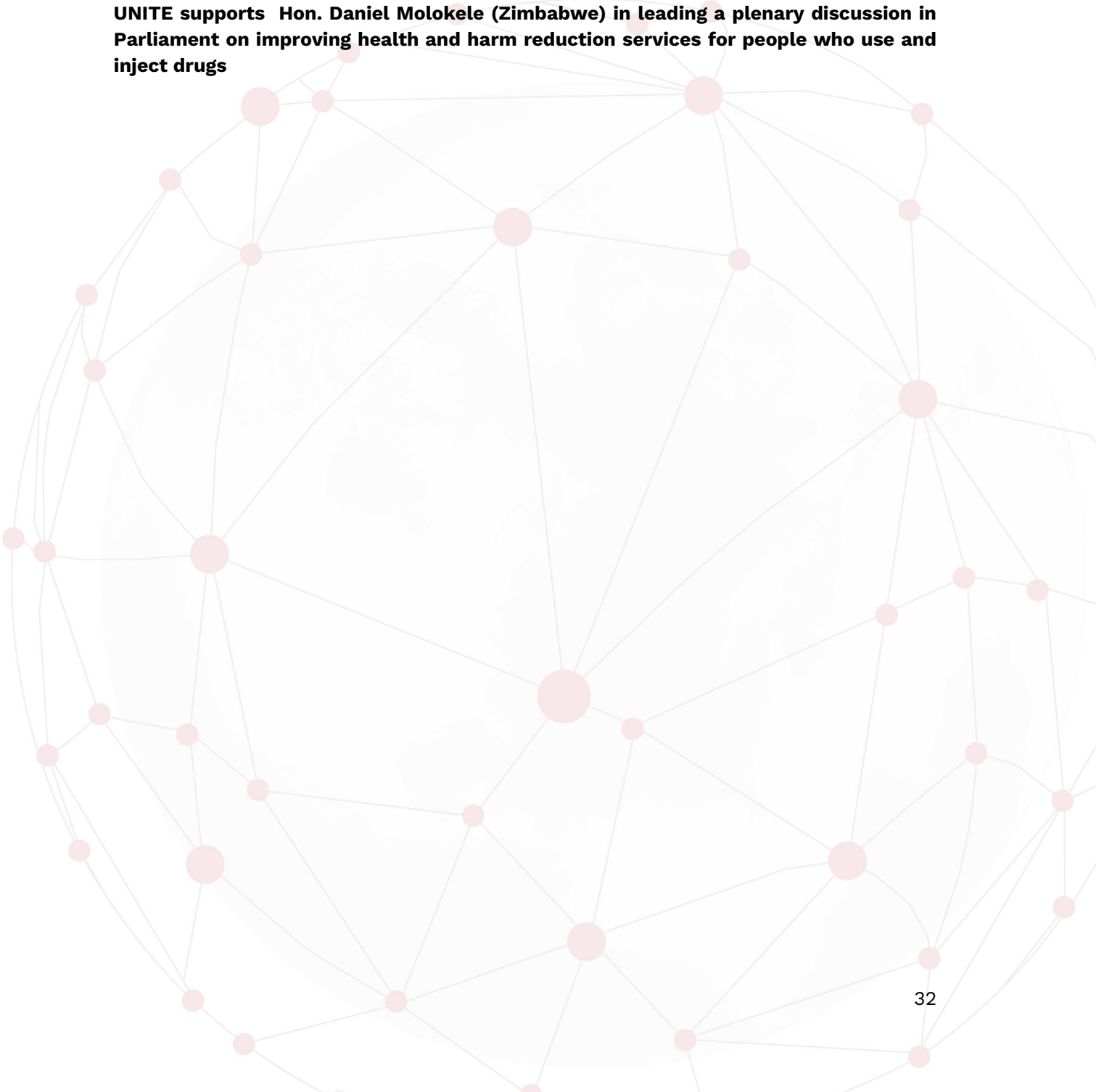
UNITE participates in the European Policy Dialogue Meeting organised by C-EHRN in Budapest, Hungary

UNITE's Drug Policy Desk presented a joint project with C-EHRN on challenges in advocacy and stakeholder engagement on harm reduction in Europe. The event took place at C-EHRN's Expert & Member Meeting in Budapest, with more than 130 professionals gathering to discuss the key activities of the network.

UNITE organises a virtual EECA Regional Meeting on the objectives for the region for 2024

UNITE organises a virtual meeting of the Western and Central Europe Chapter focusing on Sustainable Financing

UNITE supports Hon. Daniel Molokele (Zimbabwe) in leading a plenary discussion in Parliament on improving health and harm reduction services for people who use and inject drugs





05

**Targets for
the next cycle**

TARGETS FOR THE NEXT CYCLE

In the course of 2022, UNITE has adopted its strategic plan until 2025, which has been followed through 2023.

Considering the current global health crisis and consequences it has triggered around the world, the network's activity for the remaining of the 2022-2025 period will take a matrixed approach to global health, working with parliamentarians and partners to accelerate action taken with a focus on three cross-cutting priority areas:

- Human rights and equitable access to health – working to ensure that everyone, everywhere can achieve the highest attainable standard of health, with an emphasis on vulnerable and marginalized populations facing greater difficulties in access to health services. Actions must be taken to prevent a higher burden on these populations with a special focus on women, children, and adolescents' health.
- Strengthening of health systems - supporting the development of modern, agile, and qualitative health systems focused on patient needs and delivering maximum value, capable of generating wellbeing for all and respond to main global health challenges.
- Global Health architecture and security - building robust multilateral cooperation at global and regional level with the aim of equipping health systems to prevent and tackle outbreaks of epidemic diseases and other global health threats.

Based on this approach, UNITE's strategy is built around 4 main pillars aiming to develop a solid and necessary platform for parliamentarians willing to promote efficient and sustainable policies for improved global health systems worldwide.

1. A stronger and more integrated network

To accelerate change and support parliamentarians' work to promote efficient and sustainable policies for improved global health systems, UNITE needs to grow its membership and representation around the world in order to present increased opportunities of networking and experience sharing between members, partners, affected communities and civil society representatives. This improved quantity and quality of experience sharing will continue to drive UNITE's work in the remaining 2022-2025 period.

2. A connecting platform for policymakers in global health

Beyond growing the network in terms of quantity and quality, it is also important to develop the connections between the network itself and between the network and other partners who are willing to support UNITE's action and in a position to bring an added value to parliamentarians' work. This stream of work will focus on the development of the International Forum on Global Health and the increased support of Global Health subcommittees around the world.

3. A global health policy lab for parliamentarians

Growing the network and its connectivity goes with growing its added value. UNITE will aim at developing and increasing its production of information and guidance to parliamentarians. More than creating scientific evidence, UNITE will serve as a policy lab where science meets public policy and proposes a series of action plans for parliamentarians who wish to take the agenda forward in their countries.

4. A driver for policy change

Combining a stronger and more connected network to a dynamic platform of information gives the right tools for UNITE's members to act, whenever a window of opportunity opens. With that in mind, the last, but not less essential pillar of this strategy focuses on identifying the windows of opportunity for change and communicating them in a timely manner to the right audience. UNITE will act as a conductor for change orchestrating the flow of information and directing it to the people who can implement it the right way.

While establishing these 4 pillars UNITE aims to develop a solid and necessary platform for parliamentarians willing to promote efficient and sustainable policies for improved global health systems worldwide. We are confident that the work we have undertaken so far will persevere and flourish in 2024, for a more sustainable and healthier world, today and tomorrow.



06

**Our
partners**

OUR FUNDERS



OUR PARTNERS



OUR PRO BONO PARTNERS



The background features a dark red globe with a network of white lines and circular nodes overlaid on it. The nodes are of varying sizes and are connected by thin white lines, creating a global network pattern. The globe itself is a lighter shade of red, showing the outlines of continents.

UNIT2

Parliamentarians Network
for Global Health 