

Supporting the election of Dr Sania Nishtar for the position of Director General of the World Health Organization

I am proud to say that in my former capacity as WHO Country Representative in Pakistan for over a decade, I frequently interacted with Dr Sania Nishtar and got a unique opportunity to benefit from her public health leadership talents. She has made marvellous contributions to the national health sector development as the President of Heartfile, an NGO think tank, bridging and bringing together the health service delivery systems and the academic and research institutions of the country. Through her extensive research and a plethora of publications, she was able to attract the attention of the national and international community using the generated evidence to leverage for change and public health action. This has demonstrated that the influence and contributions of the institutions cannot match with the human capacity of performance, and this understanding is substantiated by Dr Sania Nishtar's colossal and unparalleled drive in public health. I am indeed gratified by empowering WHO through our solid technical partnerships with the multifaceted public health efforts led by Dr Nishtar. Her leadership capacity and negotiation skills are clearly elucidated from her struggle against the imperfect implementation of the 18th Constitutional Amendment that led to the abolition of the federal Ministry of Health in Pakistan, and mobilizing the Government of Pakistan, during her term as a Federal Minister, to reverse this decision, an action that resulted in re-establishing a focused Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination within the domain of the Federal Cabinet of Pakistan. Dr Sania Nishtar has been a prolific professional scholar and talented health system leader with an outstanding outreach to the global public health community. Dr Nishtar possesses strong and concrete managerial competencies and is fully familiar with the public health problems facing our world and recognizes this knowledge and expertise as a top priority. These technical and leadership managerial qualities, combined with her clear strategic vision, eminently qualify her to become the Director General of WHO, and I am sure that the member states will use the opportunity of her nomination, to transform the organization to its highest level of efficiency.

Dr Khalif Bile

Former WHO Country Representative, Pakistan