

VIRCHOW  
PRIZE  
FOR GLOBAL HEALTH



VIRCHOW PRIZE FOR  
GLOBAL HEALTH  
2023 AWARD CEREMONY

# CEREMONY PROGRAMME

## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2023 | 17:00

### FESTSAAL | ROTES RATHAUS BERLIN

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#### WELCOME NOTES

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##### KAI WEGNER

Governing Mayor of Berlin

##### BÄRBEL BAS

President of the German Bundestag

##### GERALD HAUG

President, Virchow Foundation  
for Global Health

President, German National Academy of  
Sciences Leopoldina

##### TEDROS ADHANOM

##### GHEBREYESUS

Director-General

World Health Organization

##### BERLIN PHILHARMONIC

##### BRASS QUINTET

Musical Interlude

PRESENTATION OF  
VIRCHOW PRIZE  
FOR GLOBAL HEALTH  
**ROSE GANA FOMBAN  
LEKE**

LAUDATION BY  
**DR MATSHIDISO MOETI**

Regional Director of Africa  
World Health Organization

**BERLIN PHILHARMONIC  
BRASS QUINTET**

Musical Interlude

#### CLOSING REMARKS

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##### RECEPTION

Wappensaal & Virchow Lounge

##### MASTER OF CEREMONY

##### AYOADE ALAKIJA

Co-Chair, Impact Investment Initiative  
for Global Health (Triple I)



# HIGH PATRON 2023 VIRCHOW PRIZE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the 2023 Virchow Prize for Global Health, recognizing exceptional lifetime achievements and raising awareness of one of our most important assets: health.

The COVID-19 pandemic has painfully demonstrated how closely interconnected and global our health is. It is important to raise awareness about the relationship between health, education, environment, and social determinants – in the spirit of Rudolf Virchow. As a former passionate health politician and current President of the German Bundestag, I am pleased to be the patron of the 2023 Virchow Prize for Global Health, to acknowledge innovations and lifetime achievements towards “Health for All”.

I extend my sincere congratulations to the 2023 Laureate, Emeritus Professor Rose Leke, for her outstanding dedication in pioneering invaluable malaria research. It is important to me to advocate for greater participation of women in science and gender-sensitive health care.

I thank the Virchow Foundation for Global Health for hosting this important award and wish you a wonderful ceremony and all the best.

**BÄRBEL BAS**  
PRESIDENT OF THE  
GERMAN BUNDESTAG  
*HIGH PATRON OF THE  
2023 VIRCHOW PRIZE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH*

# WELCOME KAI WEGNER



Dear distinguished guests and esteemed colleagues,

It is with immense pleasure that I welcome each one of you on behalf of the city of Berlin. It is a privilege to host the prestigious Virchow Prize for Global Health in our country's capital, highlighting the outstanding contributions to this important field from all over the world.

In the spirit of Rudolf Virchow, whose pioneering work revolutionised our understanding of medicine and public health, we are gathering here to celebrate and honour those exceptional individuals and organisations that have dedicated themselves to improving the health and well-being of people around the world.

Berlin, a city that embraces innovation, research, and global cooperation, is a fitting venue for this momentous occasion. As we come together to acknowledge the groundbreaking achievements in the field of global health, we are reminded of the power of collaboration and the profound impact it can have on transforming lives.

I extend my congratulations to the 2023 Virchow Prize for Global Health laureate and heartfelt thanks to the Virchow Foundation for Global Health for organising this special event. May this celebration of global health inspire new connections and an unforgettable time in Berlin.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Wegner'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

KAI WEGNER  
GOVERNING MAYOR OF BERLIN



# WELCOME TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS

Dear guests and friends,

I am delighted to welcome you to the 2023 Virchow Prize for Global Health. Last year, I had the honour of opening the inaugural ceremony of this prestigious prize, establishing it as a new platform to raise awareness and promote collaboration for global health. The Virchow Prize highlights the importance of international, interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral cooperation and has support from the highest levels of the German government.

Germany has been a strong partner in strengthening health systems to build a healthier and more equitable world. It has demonstrated exceptional political leadership and vision in helping to strengthen the global health architecture for future generations, including hosting the WHO Hub for Pandemic and Epidemic Intelligence in Berlin. WHO continues to look to Germany for its partnership and leadership as we work together to catalyse positive change on the path towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

This year's Virchow Prize for Global Health honours 2023 laureate Emeritus Professor Rose Leke. Professor Leke was selected by the Virchow Prize Committee for her distinctive and exceptional lifetime achievements in strengthening global health,

her dedication to advancing gender equality, and her pioneering research in malaria and other pressing infectious diseases. Professor Leke is a Fellow of the Cameroon Academy of Sciences, the former head of the faculty of medicine at the University of Yaoundé I, and the former president of the Federation of African Immunological Societies. She has served on many prestigious scientific advisory committees, including for WHO.

Our celebration of Professor Leke recognizes her dedication to the importance of solidarity and equity in global health, to achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, and the importance of worldwide cooperation as we work together to achieve Health for All.

**TEDROS ADHANOM  
GHEBREYESUS**  
DIRECTOR-GENERAL  
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

# WELCOME FOUNDERS



Esteemed guests of the 2023 Virchow Prize for Global Health Award Ceremony, Dear friends & colleagues,

It is our great pleasure to welcome you once again to celebrate outstanding lifetime achievements in the field of global health. Last year's ceremony marked a significant milestone in our collective journey towards a healthier, more equitable world. Today, we look back with immense pride on the resounding success of the Virchow Prize for Global Health and are honoured to continue this journey by celebrating the 2023 Laureate Professor Rose Gana Fomban Leke.

Rose Leke is awarded the 2023 Virchow Prize for Global Health for her distinctive and exceptional lifetime achievements in pioneering infectious disease research and advancing gender equality. We recognize Rose Leke's impressive legacy in harnessing science, innovation and collaboration to strengthen our global health landscape, bringing us closer to our shared vision of "Health for All" and that of the Prize's namesake, Rudolf Virchow.

The 2023 Virchow Prize for Global Health is held under the high patronage of Ms Bärbel Bas, President of the German Bundestag. The patronage of President Bas underlines the importance of global health as an important compass for humanitarian, peace-making and sustainable policy. This role also continues the support of the German government for the Virchow Prize and the United Nations 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development Goals, which was first held by the 2022 High Patron, President of the Federal Republic of Germany, Dr Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

On behalf of the Virchow Foundation for Global Health, we extend our heartfelt appreciation to all the members and participations who shared their time and expertise to make this possible. Your unwavering commitment to improve global health continues to serve as a beacon of hope and inspiration for generations to come.

CHRISTOPH MARKSCHIES

GERALD HAUG

FRIEDE SPRINGER

ROLAND GÖHDE

DETLEV GANTEN



## RUDOLF VIRCHOW

The Virchow Prize for Global Health is named in honour of Rudolf Virchow – a physician at the Charité University Medicine Berlin and founder of the famous Berlin School of Medicine, which laid the foundation for today's Berlin School of Health. Born over 200 years ago on October 13, 1821, Rudolf Virchow is a unique example of a great scientist, medical doctor, pathologist, anthropologist, sociologist and influential politician, who with his ideas, discoveries and activities, had profound impact on the health and well-being of people during his time through present day.

Virchow united in one person the interdisciplinary, intersectoral and humanistic concept of well-being which is needed today to improve health at a global scale. Rudolf Virchow is thus a role model and inspiration to overcome complexity and to bridge the great variety of challenges within health and related areas. He coined the famous concept that medicine is a social science.

Laureates of the Virchow Prize for Global Health will be shining examples in striving for these ambitious efforts, while providing inspiration to the community in improving health and well-being for all – our common and noble goal.

**“MEDICINE IS A SOCIAL SCIENCE  
AND POLITICS IS NOTHING BUT  
MEDICINE ON A GRAND SCALE!”**



# 2023 VIRCHOW PRIZE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH LAUREATE

## ROSE GANA FOMBAN LEKE

The 2023 Virchow Prize for Global Health laureate is Emeritus Professor Rose Gana Fomban Leke. She is awarded for her distinctive and exceptional lifetime achievements in strengthening global health, pioneering infectious disease research towards a malaria-free world and relentless dedication in advancing gender equality.

Rose Leke was born in Cameroon and began her impressive academic career at the St. Mary-of-the-Woods College in Indiana, United States. Finishing her undergraduate studies in 1969, Rose Leke completed a master's degree in Zoology at the University of Illinois, Champagne Urbana, USA, and later a Ph.D. in Microbiology and Immunology at the Université de Montréal, which she obtained in 1979.

In 1985, Professor Rose Leke began at the University of Yaoundé I as a Lecturer, advancing to Director of the Biotechnology Centre and Head of the Department of Microbiology, Haematology, Immunology and Infectious Diseases within the Faculty of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences twenty years later.

In 2002, Dr Leke was appointed Chair of the Board of Directors of the Institute of Medical Research and the Studies of Medicinal Plants (IMPM)

at the Ministry of Scientific Research Yaoundé by presidential decree. In 2014, Leke was called to Chair the Scientific and Educational Council (CRFD-SVSE) by national decree of the Rector of the University of Yaoundé; positions she stills holds today. She is Vice Chair of the Scientific Committee of the Cameroon First Lady's Research Institute, CIRCB.

As a prominent and essential thought leader in global health for over four decades, Rose Leke continues to actively shape and engage in the global health landscape, advising several prestigious initiatives, global policy-making bodies and boards. Among them, Chair of the African Regional Commission for the Certification of Eradication of Poliomyelitis (ARCC)- the commission that declared the Region free from Indigenous Wild Polio Virus on August 25, 2020, and Rose read the declaration; Cameroonian National Immunization Technical Advisory Group (NITAG), the WHO's Malaria Policy Advisory Group, Chair of the ARCC, a member of the Global Commission for the Eradication of Polio towards certifying the world free of poliomyelitis. She co-chairs with the Dean of the School of Public Health, "Harvard's Defeating Malaria Initiative" and was recently appointed Chair of Gavi's Independent Review Committee (IRC) in 2023.



As one of six women selected for the African Union Kwame Nkrumah Scientific Award for Women in 2011, Rose Leke received a letter of congratulations from the President and First Lady of the Republic of Cameroon. To build on this recognition and to raise awareness on the crucial gap of women's participation in science, Professor Leke founded, with the help of other senior scientists, the Higher Institute for Growth in Health Research for Women (HIGHER Women's Consortium). Since its implementation it has grown to great heights, spurring interest from younger women in health science research. Rose Leke is an icon for many adolescent girls and women pursuing a scientific career, continuously paving the way for their active participation through transformative leadership at both the societal and structural levels.

These powerful advancements in fighting for gender equity are joined with her important research and contributions to our collective understanding of infectious diseases. Professor Leke is recognized as a leading African immunologist, parasitologist and malarialogist who has pioneered collaborative research within the broad areas of immunology and parasitology, while playing an instrumental role in advancing the global health landscape in Africa and abroad.

A primary focus of her scientific work has been on parasitic infections, particularly innovative research in malaria and pregnancy-associated malaria.

Bolstering her remarkable research career, Rose Leke has also demonstrated exceptional dedication to polio eradication by being in the forefront of comprehensive initiatives on the ground, working with all partners, governments and communities. These collaborative efforts between local partners and multinational organisations led to improved vaccination access, strengthened surveillance and outbreak responses towards global polio eradication.

For over forty years, Rose Leke has demonstrated the utmost impressive dedication in advancing research, engagement and awareness for the eradication of deadly infectious diseases alongside her continuous leadership in trailblazing for women and girls to succeed in science. Combined, these efforts have contributed immensely to mobilising the attainment of the United Nations 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development Goals and "health and well-being for all".

# VIRCHOW PRIZE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH



The Virchow Prize for Global Health is an international award of the highest prestige, awarding laureates €500,000 for their outstanding achievements in addressing the global health challenges.

The Virchow Prize for Global Health was founded with the vision to simplify the complexity of global health challenges and give a face to those who dedicate their lives to bridging these health areas and improving outcomes. Moreover, it aims to incentivize and spur future generations of great minds in their commitment to global health.

It is with this spirit and intention that the Virchow Prize for Global Health honours lifetime achievements towards health for all. Most importantly, these accomplishments must align and uphold the United Nations 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) – an ambitious framework of action to carry the planet onto a more sustainable path.

The Virchow Prize for Global Health is the first award of such high prestige to be intentionally established in direct connection to the UN SDGs. Specifically, addressing SDG 3 “Good Health and Well-Being” among the 17 SDGs. The Virchow Prize aims to serve as a beacon – shining bright light on the importance and interconnectedness of health, across all societies and cultures around the world.

The Virchow Prize is awarded by the Virchow Foundation for Global Health, a non-profit foundation established through the support of the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina and the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, alongside civil society and leading experts within global health.

The mission of the Virchow Foundation for Global Health is to provide a platform which promotes global and public health through the following pillars:

- Awarding of the Virchow Prize for Global Health.
- Promotion of research projects and the application of research results.
- Networking across actors, sectors, and disciplines related to global and public health.
- Supporting symposia and conferences in the field of global health.



## VIRCHOW PRIZE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH TROPHY

The Virchow Prize for Global Health trophy aspires to be recognised as a symbol of innovation and dedication to advancing health for all. This one of a kind design provides a bridge between the past and future of global health. Its central feature is the glass specimen jar, curated from the Pathology Laboratory of the Charité University Medicine in Berlin. Estimated to be more than 100 years old, similar specimen jars were utilized by Rudolf Virchow himself to preserve medical discoveries and contribute to the advancement of science and education.

Suspended within each Virchow Prize for Global Health trophy is a “specimen” that represents or symbolizes the longstanding work of the laureates and their unique contribution to global health. Within the trophy is a brass plate, laser etched with the name of the laureate and indicating the awarding year. The lid is additionally made of brass, etched with the image of Rudolf Virchow and sealed.

This original jar featuring the specimen, brass plate and lid will be showcased in the Berlin Museum of Medical History of the Charité for students and international guests to visit and learn from the achievements of the Virchow Prize for Global Health laureates – upholding Rudolf Virchow’s lifelong ambition to democratize and stimulate education.

BERLIN MUSEUM OF MEDICAL HISTORY  
OF THE CHARITÉ  
CHARITÉPLATZ 1  
10117 BERLIN

# MASTER OF CEREMONY AYOADE ALAKIJA



Dr Ayoade Alakija is a renowned global health and humanitarian leader with over two decades of experience across Asia, the Americas, the Pacific region, Europe, and Africa. As a medical doctor, she brings a wealth of knowledge to her role, advocating for equitable access to healthcare, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2021, Dr Alakija was appointed WHO Special Envoy for the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-Accelerator) by World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. Dr Alakija also serves as the board Chair of the Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics (FIND), is an Ambassador for the World Health Summit and is the Chair of the African Union's African Vaccine Delivery Alliance/Africa Countermeasures and Readiness Platform.

In September 2023, she was appointed Co-Chair of the Impact Investment Initiative for Global Health (Triple I), launched following the G7 Hiroshima Summit.

Previously, as Chief Humanitarian Coordinator for Nigeria, Dr Alakija led the integrated humanitarian response and spearheaded the Oslo Humanitarian Conference for Nigeria and the Lake Chad region, mobilizing resources for some of the world's most under-recognized humanitarian crises. She also founded the Emergency Coordination Centre in Nigeria, promoting the rights of women and girls in education and health.

Through her work, Dr Alakija has been a leading voice calling for the urgent reimagining of how the globe should respond more consciously to the inequities in general and particularly, in access to healthcare as exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

AYOADE ALAKIJA  
CO-CHAIR  
IMPACT INVESTMENT INITIATIVE  
FOR GLOBAL HEALTH  
(TRIPLE I)

# MUSICIANS



## BERLIN PHILHARMONIC BRASS QUINTET

The Berlin Philharmonic Brass Ensemble is one of the longest performing chamber music groups in the Philharmonic. The members' common interest in making music as soloists is the equivalent of their daily orchestral work. The nuanced wind technique and the German instruments, which are preferred for their beauty of sound, characterize this ensemble. The concerts of the Berlin Philharmonic Brass Ensemble are a celebration of the diversity of brass music which ranges from traditional work of the baroque and classical eras through to commissions by leading contemporary composers and entertaining arrangements of jazz and other well-known popular pieces. Their successful concert schedule regularly takes the ensemble to many European music capitals and festival venues as well as tours as far away as Japan.

It is a special pleasure to welcome a dedicated quintet of this ensemble to the 2023 Virchow Prize for Global Health Award Ceremony.

GUILLAUME JEHL | TRUMPET • TAMAS VELENCZEI |  
TRUMPE • SARAH WILLIS | FRENCH HORN • OLAF OTT |  
TROMBONE • ALEXANDER VON PUTTKAMER | TUBA

## LEELO MURUMÄGI

Leelo is from a small country known mostly for its one-time Eurovision success. In Estonian her name quite literally translates as 'folk song' and as chances have it, she's been chasing a career in music ever since she was a child. It all started with classical flute, concert bands and choirs, which then led her to study composition and musicology, which in turn threw Leelo completely off her path and inspired her to become a songwriter instead.

For the past four years she has worked in Berlin as an independent musician, playing on the streets, touring and growing a loyal audience. Her music takes influence from classical rock and classical music, infused with a modern, singer-songwriter writing style. Her direct lyrics, honesty and strong presence is something that has resonated with the audience on and off the stage. Since her debut album release in 2019 she has toured internationally and worked together with the likes of Shure microphones, Stag Music and Melt! Booking. She's currently working on her next releases.

# FRIENDS OF THE VIRCHOW FOUNDATION FOR GLOBAL HEALTH

## A PLATFORM FOR CHANGE

The Friends of the Virchow Foundation for Global Health are a group of highly committed individuals and strategic partners, such as companies, foundations and NGOs, who support the Virchow Foundation's goals by:

- raising awareness on the importance of global health among the broader public
- networking actors, sectors and disciplines related to global health on a national and international level
- elevating the recognition of the Virchow Prize for Global Health

You are invited to become part of our global network, helping us to achieve our goals.

Would you like to support the healthcare access of future generations worldwide and help shape our future in a sustainable way? You can fund the goals of the Virchow Foundation for Global Health with a one-time or recurring, tax-deductible donation.

Leave a legacy for a better and healthier future through an endowment to the Virchow Foundation for Global Health. With a testamentary donation or endowment, you have the opportunity to contribute long term funding to a specific focal point or project

in the field of global health. If you are interested in an endowment or have specific questions, we would be pleased to continue the conversation personally.

### POOL NETWORKS AND COLLECTIVELY ACHIEVE MORE

As a company, foundation or NGO already active in the field of global health, you have the opportunity to become part of an exclusive and dedicated network which contributes to innovative solutions at the national, international and global level. These efforts uphold UN Sustainable Development Goal #17 – “Partnerships for the Goals”.

Individual arrangements regarding a particular engagement with the Virchow Foundation for Global Health and your ideas for joint initiatives and campaigns are very welcome. Please feel invited to contact us any time.

Friends of the Virchow Foundation for Global Health  
Dr Harald Hasselmann, Chair  
[friends@virchow.foundation](mailto:friends@virchow.foundation)  
[virchow.foundation/friends](http://virchow.foundation/friends)

# WORLD HEALTH SUMMIT 2023 OPENING CEREMONY

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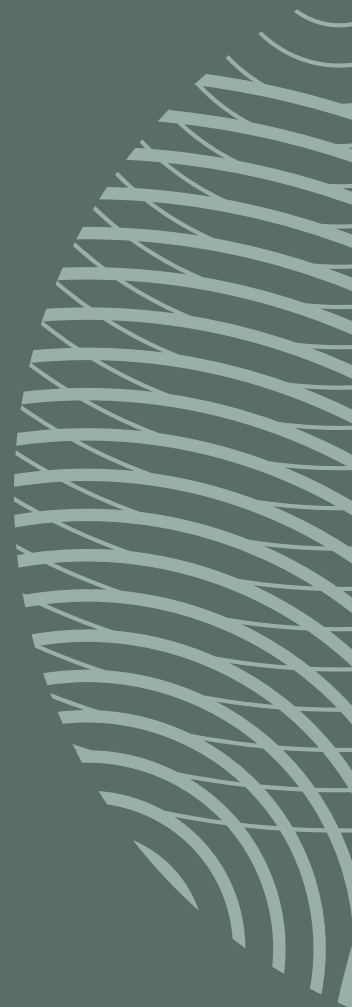
Since its founding, the Virchow Foundation for Global Health has been working closely with the World Health Summit. In May 2023, the two organisations formalised their partnership to work closer together to promote global health issues in a targeted and comprehensive manner in line with the health-related SDGs. Both organisations strengthen their cooperation through a dedicated partnership agreement with a focus on humanitarian, multilateral and multisectoral engagement as well as science-based health strategy and policy.

Each year the Virchow Prize for Global Health Award Ceremony is held the evening before the World Health Summit. As a gesture of this partnership, a handover takes place during the closing words of the Virchow Prize Ceremony between leadership of the two organisations. The following evening, at the Opening Ceremony of the World Health Summit, the Virchow Prize laureate has a designated intervention within the programme.

## PHOTO CREDITS

- 1 Portrait Bas: Tobias Koch
- 2 Portrait Wegner: Yves Sucksdorff
- 3 Portrait Ghebreyesus: WHO/Christopher Black
- 4 Portrait Leke: Nina Dzenyuy
- 5 Portrait Alakija: Renee Lansdowne
- 6 Berlin Philharmonic: Posztós János
- 7 Portrait Murumägi: Libby Edwards

OCTOBER 14, 2023  
ROTES RATHAUS BERLIN



HONOURING LIFETIME  
ACHIEVEMENTS TOWARDS  
HEALTH FOR ALL