

VIRCHOW  
PRIZE  
TOWARDS HEALTH FOR ALL



# THE VIRCHOW PRIZE 2024 AWARD CEREMONY

# CEREMONY PROGRAMME

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2024 | 17:00 CET  
FESTSAAL | ROTES RATHAUS BERLIN

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## BERLIN PHILHARMONIC BRASS QUINTET

Festive Musical Entrée

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## WELCOME NOTES

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### KAI WEGNER

Governing Mayor of Berlin

### BÄRBEL BAS

President of the German Bundestag

### TEDROS ADHANOM

### GHEBREYESUS

Director-General

World Health Organization (WHO)

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## BERLIN PHILHARMONIC BRASS QUINTET

Musical Interlude

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### KARL LAUTERBACH

German Federal Minister of Health

### GERALD HAUG

President, Virchow Foundation

President, German National Academy of  
Sciences Leopoldina

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## PRESENTATION OF THE VIRCHOW PRIZE 2024

### LUCY GILSON

### JOHAN ROCKSTRÖM

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## CLOSING REMARKS

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## RECEPTION

Virchow Lounge

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## MASTER OF CEREMONY

### HIBA BOUJNAH

Head of International Cooperation and  
Partnerships

Charité – University Medicine Berlin

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# HIGH PATRON THE VIRCHOW PRIZE 2024

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the Virchow Prize 2024 Award Ceremony, recognizing groundbreaking research, major innovations and outstanding contributions with significant impact on the broad health challenges we face as a global community.

My heartfelt congratulations to Lucy Gilson and Johan Rockström for receiving the Virchow Prize 2024. Lucy Gilson works to govern and lead health systems to ensure all people have access to good health care. Johan Rockström researches how we can live in harmony with nature to ensure our health. These topics are crucial for shaping global health policy. Moreover, both laureates align their excellent research with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals

of the United Nations. I am pleased the independent Virchow Prize Committee has made clear the importance of addressing global health issues holistically towards creating a healthier and fairer world.

I thank the Virchow Foundation for hosting this important award and hope you have a wonderful experience celebrating these two distinguished Virchow Prize 2024 Laureates.

**BÄRBEL BAS**  
PRESIDENT OF THE  
GERMAN BUNDESTAG  
*HIGH PATRON OF  
THE VIRCHOW PRIZE 2024*

# WELCOME KAI WEGNER



Health and well-being for all: this goal defined by one man – Rudolf Virchow – more than one hundred years ago has long since become a global objective and was even enshrined in the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations.

Berlin is committed to achieving this goal as well. Many nurses, doctors, and researchers here are working towards it every day. In addition to being the German capital, Berlin is an international healthcare hub today with cutting-edge medical research facilities, world-class hospitals, and a diverse start-up ecosystem. Together they are driving medical innovation forward.

The Virchow Prize also promotes this goal. For the third time, scientists are being honoured for their groundbreaking research to strengthen global health. This year's laureates, Lucy Gilson and Johan

Rockström, are receiving the Virchow Prize for their holistic, system-based approaches to safeguarding both human and planetary health. Their work shows once again that health and well-being are not exclusively medical issues, but must always be considered and addressed in a social, societal, and environmental context.

I extend my congratulations to Professors Gilson and Rockström and a warm welcome to you all here in Berlin – and the Red Town Hall – for the award ceremony.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Wegner'.

KAI WEGNER  
GOVERNING MAYOR OF BERLIN



# WELCOME KARL LAUTERBACH

It is with delight that I extend a warm welcome to you to the Virchow Prize 2024 Award Ceremony, honouring two luminaries whose pioneering work has significantly advanced our understanding of the critical relationship between systems, human and planetary health: Lucy Gilson and Johan Rockström.

It is a pressing need of our global community to address the interconnected challenges of disease prevention, health promotion and climate change we face with enhanced health systems resilience and combined global health efforts. In Germany, we continuously aim to demonstrate leadership for these health challenges. In July 2024, we launched plans for a new Federal Institute for Prevention and Education in Medicine (BIPAM), which seeks to strengthen national health infrastructure by focusing exactly on the areas of prevention, health education, and public awareness.

This year's laureates combined efforts resonate deeply with this need while upholding the spirit of the Virchow Prize, which seeks to recognize endeavours that bridge disciplines and foster holistic solutions to global challenges. Their achievements inspire to what is possible for achieving a sustainable and healthy future.

I extend my sincere congratulations to the Virchow Prize 2024 Laureates, Lucy Gilson and Johan Rockström, for their holistic and systems-based approach safeguarding human and planetary health

Thank you to the Virchow Foundation for hosting this important award in Berlin. I wish you a memorable evening.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Lauterbach', written in a cursive style.

KARL LAUTERBACH  
FEDERAL MINISTER OF HEALTH  
GERMANY

# WELCOME TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS



Dear colleagues and friends,

A warm welcome to the Virchow Prize 2024 Award Ceremony. This event, now in its third year, is a testament to the power of global collaboration and the critical need for innovative approaches to the many challenges we face in health today.

This evening we celebrate the achievements of two exceptional individuals: Professor Lucy Gilson and Professor Johan Rockström. Professors Gilson and Rockström's pioneering efforts not only advance our understanding of complex health systems, but also underscore the importance of collaborative solutions. Congratulations to Professors Gilson and Rockström on receiving the Virchow Prize for 2024.

Their work demonstrates the interconnectedness between resilient health systems and planetary health. Strong health systems are the backbone of our response to health emergencies and the delivery of equitable health services. However, to ensure these systems are truly effective, we must also consider the broader environmental context in which they operate. Investing in health systems while simultaneously taking decisive action to protect and restore our environment benefits both people and the planet.

I offer special thanks to Germany for its leadership and support of global health and of WHO, including in the areas of health systems strengthening, emergencies, pandemic preparedness, and antimicrobial resistance.

We live in challenging times of multiple threats to health, from conflict to climate change, epidemics and pandemics, the challenges of rapidly ageing populations, the increasing burden of noncommunicable diseases, and more. None of us can solve these challenges alone, but we can all make a difference. The pioneering research of Professors Gilson and Rockström and the steadfast political and financial commitment of Germany to global health are vital contributions to fulfilling the vision on which WHO was founded in 1948: the highest attainable standard of health for all people, as a fundamental human right.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'T'.

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



# WELCOME FOUNDERS

Honourable, esteemed guests,

A cordial welcome to the Virchow Prize 2024 Award Ceremony. It is with immense pride and joy that we honour two extraordinary individuals whose groundbreaking work embodies the spirit of innovation and commitment for which the Virchow Foundation was founded.

We are greatly excited to recognize and congratulate Lucy Gilson and Johan Rockström as distinguished Virchow Prize 2024 Laureates. The contributions of this year's awardees have not only advanced our understanding in their respective fields, but they have also significantly impacted global well-being and sustainability as enshrined by the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

Lucy Gilson's pioneering research in health systems and policy has reshaped our approach to equitable healthcare, demonstrating a profound dedication to improving lives across the globe. Lucy's work stands as a testament to the power of combining scientific rigor with compassionate vision.

Johan Rockström's leadership in environmental science and sustainability has been instrumental in driving global efforts to address climate change. Johan's groundbreaking research on planetary boundaries has provided us with critical insights and a roadmap for a more sustainable future.

As tonight we celebrate Lucy Gilson and Johan Rockström and their remarkable achievements for a holistic and systems-based approach safeguarding human and planetary health, we also reflect on the values that drive our foundation: humanity, health equity, and a relentless pursuit of knowledge. Lucy and Johan exemplify these values through their exceptional work, and we are honoured to pay tribute to their contributions and continuous commitment.

Thank you for joining us in this celebration of excellence and inspiration.

Yours sincerely,

CHRISTOPH MARKSCHIES

GERALD HAUG

FRIEDE SPRINGER

ROLAND GÖHDE

DETLEV GANTEN



# HONoured FOR THEIR BASED APPROACH SAFE PLANETARY

## THE VIRCHOW PRIZE 2024 LAUREATES LUCY GILSON

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Lucy Gilson is a globally renowned health policy and systems researcher who emphasizes the critical role of efficient health systems to ensure the well-being of populations worldwide. Currently, Gilson leads the Health Policy and Systems Division at the University of Cape Town's School of Public Health and holds a professorship at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM). Her academic background includes degrees in Politics, Philosophy, and Economics from Oxford University, a master's degree in development economics from the University of East Anglia, and a PhD in Health Economics from LSHTM. Gilson's career spans several influential roles, including her work in Swaziland's Ministry of Health and various research and leadership positions in South Africa and the UK. Her research, primarily focused on Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, has global implications for health policy and systems.

Gilson's approach is characterized by close collaboration with decision-makers at various levels, advocating for people-centred health systems and transformative governance. She explores how health

services are organised, financed, and delivered, with a focus on equity, governance, and leadership. Gilson has significantly advanced Health Policy and Systems Research (HPSR) as a crucial field for improving health service delivery. Her work highlights the importance of interdisciplinarity and cross-sectoral collaboration, incorporating insights from sociology, anthropology, political science, and economics.

Her leadership development initiatives in South Africa and Kenya, published in *Health Policy and Planning*, have strengthened health system resilience by nurturing relationships among key actors. For her contributions, Gilson received the 2018 Lifetime Achievement Award from Health Systems Global and holds honorary positions at the University of Cape Town and the University of the Western Cape. Her work continues to be pivotal in advancing universal health coverage and equitable access to quality healthcare.

### LUCY GILSON

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA  
LONDON SCHOOL OF HYGIENE AND TROPICAL  
MEDICINE, UK



# HOLISTIC AND SYSTEMS- GUARDING HUMAN AND HEALTH



## THE VIRCHOW PRIZE 2024 LAUREATES JOHAN ROCKSTRÖM

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Johan Rockström is a globally recognized scientist, celebrated for his profound contributions to understanding how efficient health systems and planetary boundaries are vital for sustaining life on Earth. Rockström, currently leading the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK), has made formative contributions to the field of sustainable development. His groundbreaking work centres around the planetary boundaries framework, which he introduced in a 2009 *Nature* publication. This framework identifies nine critical environmental processes that define the “safe operating space” for humanity. By quantifying these boundaries, Rockström provided a scientific basis for understanding how crossing them risks triggering irreversible environmental changes, with direct consequences for human health. His 2023 study in *Nature*, highlighting that seven out of eight Earth System Boundaries have been transgressed, underscores the urgent need for global action.

Rockström’s influence extends beyond academia. He co-chaired the EAT-Lancet Commission, which proposed a universal healthy diet within the limits of

planetary boundaries, integrating food systems into the broader sustainability agenda. His work has shaped international policy debates and contributed to frameworks like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In addition to his research, Rockström has served on numerous scientific and advisory bodies, including the European Commission’s Mission Board on Climate Change. He has received multiple accolades, including the Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement in 2024 and honorary doctorates from the Universities of Ghent and Amsterdam. His work represents a critical intersection of climate science, sustainability, and public health, offering a comprehensive approach to addressing the interconnected challenges of our time. Through his holistic vision, Rockström has significantly advanced the global understanding of the necessary steps for ensuring a sustainable and healthy future for all.

**JOHAN ROCKSTRÖM**  
POTSDAM INSTITUTE FOR CLIMATE IMPACT  
RESEARCH, GERMANY

# RUDOLF VIRCHOW



The Virchow Prize 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 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 are 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!”**



The Virchow Prize is an international award honouring laureates for their outstanding achievements in addressing today's global health challenges. Founded with a vision to simplify the complexity of global health 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 health.

With this award, stellar achievements towards "health for all" and for the planet's liveability are honoured.

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, endowed with €500,000, is the first award of its kind to be intentionally established in direct connection to the UN SDGs, specifically addressing SDG 3 "Good Health and Well-Being". The Virchow Prize aims to serve as a beacon – shining brightly on the importance and interconnectedness of health, across all societies and cultures.

The Virchow Prize is awarded by the Virchow Foundation. The non-for-profit foundation was established on October 14, 2021, the 200th birthday of Rudolf Virchow, with the aim of preserving the legacy of this eminent Berlin physician, scholar, and politician, and to uphold the responsibility of science and the other sectors towards society in his spirit. The purpose of the Foundation shall be realised through the following measures:

- Awarding the Virchow Prize accompanied by expedient public relations work.
- Promotion of research projects and the application of research results.
- The networking of actors, groups of actors and sectors (civil society, NGOs, science, politics, business) relating to global health and public health at the national and international levels. Symposiums and conferences can be supported for this purpose.

For the activities beyond the Virchow Prize, the Virchow Foundation in close partnership with the World Health Summit (WHS) and will use the WHS as the primary platform.

# THE VIRCHOW PRIZE TROPHY



The Virchow Prize 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 trophy is a “specimen” that represents or symbolizes the long-standing 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 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

Dr. Hiba Boujnah is an expert in public health with extensive experience in health diplomacy, strategic planning, and cross-cultural communication. As Head of International Cooperation and Partnerships at the Charité Competence Center on Traditional and Integrative Medicine (CCCTIM) in Berlin, she advances the centre's mission to become a leader in integrating traditional and modern healthcare methods.

Dr. Boujnah has contributed to global health initiatives through her work with organisations such as the WHO, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Africa Centres for Disease Control, the African Union, and the Carter Center. As a Fulbright Scholar and published author, her career is a testament to her passion for advancing global health through collaborative and innovative approaches.

### HIBA BOUJNAH

HEAD OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION  
AND PARTNERSHIPS  
CHARITÉ COMPETENCE CENTER ON TRADITIONAL  
AND INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE (CCCTIM)

### BERLIN PHILHARMONIC BRASS QUINTET

The Berlin Philharmonic Brass Ensemble is one of the longest performing chamber music groups in the Philharmonic. The nuanced wind technique and the German instruments, which are preferred for their beauty of sound, characterize this ensemble. The standard instrumentation of four trumpets and trombones can be regarded as authentic for the music of the 16th and 17th centuries, which forms a focal point of their repertoire. It is a pleasure to welcome a dedicated quintet of this ensemble to the Virchow Prize 2024 Award Ceremony.

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 as well as tours as far away as Japan.

DAVID GUERRIER | TRUMPET • TAMÁS VELENCZEI |  
TRUMPET • SARAH WILLIS | FRENCH HORN • OLAF OTT |  
TROMBONE • ALEXANDER VON PUTTKAMER | TUBA

# FRIENDS OF THE VIRCHOW FOUNDATION

## A PLATFORM FOR CHANGE

The Friends of the Virchow Foundation 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

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 with a one-time or recurring, tax-deductible donation.

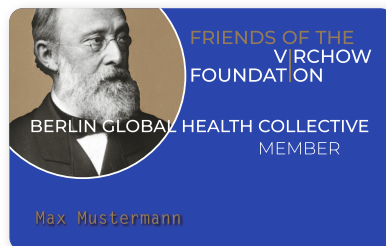
Leave a legacy for a better and healthier future through an endowment to the Virchow Foundation. With a testamentary donation or endowment, you have the opportunity to contribute long term funding to a specific focal point or project in the field of global health. If you are interested in an endowment 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 and your ideas for joint initiatives and campaigns are very welcome. Please feel invited to contact us any time.

Friends of the Virchow Foundation  
Dr Harald Hasselmann, Chair  
friends@virchow.foundation  
virchow.foundation/friends



# WORLD HEALTH SUMMIT 2024

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## WORLD HEALTH SUMMIT

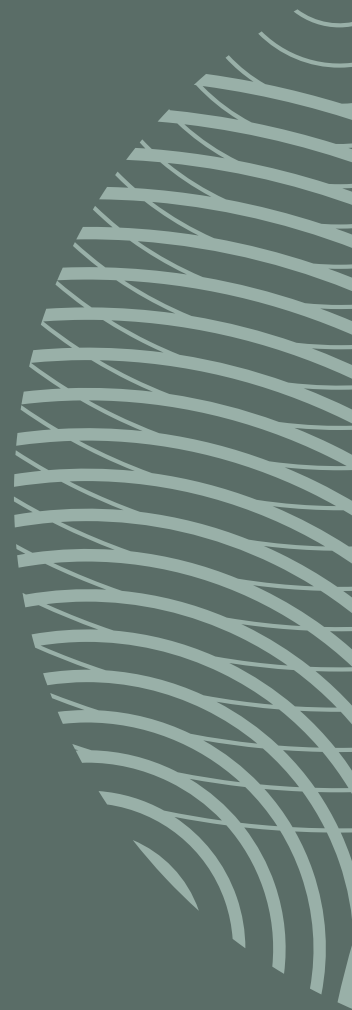
Since its founding, the Virchow Foundation has been working closely with the World Health Summit. In May 2023, the two organisations formalised their partnership to work closer together to promote global health issues in a targeted and comprehensive manner in line with the health-related SDGs. Both organisations 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 Award Ceremony is held the evening before the World Health Summit. As a gesture of this partnership, a handover first takes place during the closing words of the Virchow Prize ceremony between leadership of the two organisations.

### PHOTO CREDITS

- 1 Portrait Bas: Tobias Koch
- 2 Portrait Wegner: Yves Sucksdorff
- 3 Portrait Lauterbach: Jan Pauls
- 4 Portrait Tedros: Christopher Black
- 5 Portrait Gilson: Lucy Gilson
- 6 Portrait Rockström: Jadranko Marjanovic
- 7 Virchow Trophy: Henning Schacht
- 8 Portrait Boujnah: Hiba Boujnah
- 9 Berlin Philharmonic: Postós János

OCTOBER 12, 2024  
ROTES RATHAUS BERLIN



TOWARDS HEALTH FOR ALL