

# *The Globalization of Public Health*

## *Policy Linkages and Governance Challenges*

### Public Seminar

10am – 11am, Thursday, 3 October 2013

Venue: UNU-IIGH Building, UKM Medical Centre,  
Jalan Yaacob Latiff, Bandar Tun Razak, Cheras, 56000  
Kuala Lumpur

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### Abstract

*“Today, in an interconnected world, bacteria and viruses travel almost as fast as e-mail and financial flow...”*

*“With globalization, a single microbial sea washes all of humankind” – Gro Harlem Brundtland*

The temporal, spatial, and cognitive dimensions of globalization have significant implications for public health. Globalization erodes national boundaries in complex ways. The transnational spread of infectious diseases, and global epidemics of non-communicable diseases are both exacerbated by the globalization of the world economy; cross-border supply of goods and services; the transcontinental networks of multinational corporations whose products like tobacco may have serious health implications, especially in developing countries; migration; global travel; innovations in biotechnology; climate change and other environmental factors. These emerging trends involve new actors whose interests are often difficult to align with the goal of protection and promotion of public health. ‘Global health diplomacy’ is no longer exclusively driven by public health but by emerging trends outside the health sector.

The field of global health is now populated by “multiple actors” and influenced by “diverse interests”. The multiplicity of actors and diversity of interests in the global health arena have complicated the task of articulating effective governance and regulatory strategies in an age of globalization of public health. Global health challenges require globalized policy responses involving multiple actors – nation-states, inter-governmental organizations, private and corporate actors, and civil society. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there is an urgent need to reconstruct global health governance architecture by locating public health firmly on the global development agenda.

#### **Dr Obijiofor Aginam**

*Obi is senior research fellow in the United Nations University – International Institute for Global Health (UNU-IIGH) and adjunct research professor of law at Carleton University, Ottawa. He was previously global health leadership officer at the World Health Organization in Geneva. Dr Aginam has been a fellow of the Social Science Research Council of New York on global security and cooperation and visiting professor in universities in Costa Rica, Italy, South Africa, Japan and Nigeria. He is the author of Global Health Governance: International Law and Public Health in a Divided World. Dr Aginam serves on the editorial board of Global Health Governance: The Scholarly Journal for the New Health Security Paradigm. He has served on expert advisory panels of WHO and FAO. He holds a PhD in law from the University of British Columbia.*



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