

MANIFESTO

The COVID-19 pandemic has deeply affected all aspects of human life on every region of the planet. The social and financial cost have been profound, and the deep devastation in terms of human suffering, lost lives, and compromised potential for future generations will be felt for years to come. Experts warned that such a pandemic was likely and that we were unprepared. This has now been evident in this pandemic – we cannot let this happen again.

Fundamental action is needed now to prevent another pandemic. Governments have not followed the requirements of the IHR, nor responded to guidance from WHO, including early alerts. Authority has not been given to WHO or any other agency to act as a monitoring or inspectorate body. While much of our focus remains on getting the world back to normal through the equitable distribution of vaccines, we must also keep our eye towards the future. To prevent another pandemic, heads of state - whole governments - must negotiate and sign a global treaty or convention. This treaty should be signed at the highest level of government because pandemics affect every aspect of society: health of populations, economies and job markets, education, trade, international relations, and more. Action, therefore, must be taken to ensure that treaty provisions are properly ratified and implemented at the country level.

To prevent another global public health catastrophe, a pandemics treaty must:

- Ensure that all countries have appropriate health surveillance and preparedness plans in place as set out in the International Health Regulations.
- Require immediate transparency of governments about outbreaks and a willingness to accept independent validation.
- Require governments to provide ongoing real-time data (e.g., genomics, medical data, etc.), and accept external verification.
- Act on WHO's advice on all relevant matters at the time of an outbreak, at an early warning stage, or a Public Health Emergency of International Concern and ongoing throughout a pandemic. WHO's advice must adhere to the precautionary principle.
- Above all, allow for independent monitoring and inspection of countries' actions and require remedial measures. This will require incentives and other compliance enhancing mechanisms should countries not comply.

Structural, attitudinal, and financial changes will be required:

- Low-income and some middle-income countries will require significant financing for prevention, preparedness and immediate and guaranteed release of funds to them at the time of an outbreak.
- For WHO to be able to provide the norms, technical assistance, and guidance necessary it will need a substantial and sustainable funding increase.
- A monitoring and inspectorate function as a compliance enhancing mechanism for a pandemic treaty is required. This would report to the States that are parties to the treaty at the highest level.
- While the core technical base of a treaty would be built on the International Health Regulations (2005), new areas will need to be covered building on lesson's from the current pandemic.

In the tragic situation that confronts humanity, we urge countries to prioritize pandemics in their domestic and international political agendas. This is paramount to enable us to return to normal and to keep this from happening again. The time to act is now for heads of state to reform the global public health system by negotiating and signing a pandemics treaty or convention.

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The *Panel for a Global Public Health Convention* is a coalition of global leaders working to strengthen the ability of the world to prevent, prepare, and respond to infectious disease outbreaks before they become widespread pandemics. The Panel was formed in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is chaired by Dame Barbara Stocking, President of Murray Edwards College, Cambridge, and it consists of high-level experts in public health, finance, and international governance who work to bridge critical gaps in the global public health architecture by promulgating for a new global treaty or convention on pandemics.

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