

## **RIO DE JANEIRO DECLARATION**

### **HEALTH SOVEREIGNTY IN INNOVATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF DIAGNOSTICS, VACCINES AND MEDICATIONS FOR ADDRESSING PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY OF INTERNATIONAL CONCERN (PHEIC) IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH**

#### **We:**

The representatives of Organizations, gathered in Rio de Janeiro on July 29-30, 2024, at the *Global Pandemic Preparedness Summit 2024*, organized by the *Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI)*, the *Oswaldo Cruz Foundation*, and the *Brazilian Ministry of Health*,

Having reviewed the status of Global South countries in terms of lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic response and other health emergencies; establishment of Pandemic Financing mechanism; the capacity for readiness, preparedness and rapid, resilient response to Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC); equitable access to diagnostics, vaccines, medications, and other health technologies through research and development (R&D), technology transfer and enhancement of local and regional production capacity; supply chains, inequitable distribution, lack of trained health workforce; the feasibility of achieving the 100-day Mission for vaccines, diagnostics, and therapeutics; the need to improve integrated disease surveillance, data utilization and sharing, laboratory capacities; fit for purpose health workforce the requirements for continuous improvement and preparedness for existing and future health emergencies, and the necessity of coordinated cooperation and response efforts,

#### **Express:**

That the Global South countries were more severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, due to the access to vaccines, medicines and diagnostics delay in arriving in these countries leading to significant morbidity and mortality within their populations.

That other outbreaks, existing epidemics and health emergencies also disproportionately affect individuals, communities, and health systems in Global South countries.

That concentration of global health supply chains continues to present significant barriers for Global South countries in accessing adequate and timely supplies of health technologies, including vaccines, medications, diagnostic reagents, consumables, medical and personal protective equipment, thereby hampering their response capabilities.

That the lack of solidarity during the COVID-19 pandemic, where developed countries secured two to three times the vaccine doses required for their populations, left less developed countries facing severe access challenges.

That appropriate and affordable vaccines, medications and diagnostics and are critical for public health and disease outbreaks. However, large segments of the global population, particularly in less developed countries, either lack access to these essential health tools or have limited access.

That the COVID-19 pandemic underscored the strategic importance of health technologies availability, including vaccines, diagnostics, therapeutics and other health products, during a pandemic emergency and revealed the limited production capacity in several regions. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated that market-driven mechanisms often override public health needs, as wealthier countries secured vast quantities of vaccines early on, while the global Covax-WHO mechanism lacked sufficient funding to ensure equitable access, resulting in significant cases and deaths and disruption of health systems in Global South countries.

That, considering the COVID-19 pandemic, we have witnessed the high degree of dependency of Global South countries on imports of active ingredients or pharmaceutical products, as well as various medical supplies and equipment, underscoring the need to learn lessons to avoid repeating these issues in Public Health Emergencies of International Concern.

That a key lesson from the COVID-19 pandemic is that we will not achieve equity in access to vaccines, treatments, diagnostics, and other strategic health tools and supplies, nor meet the needs of our populations, if we rely solely on the research and development, and production capabilities of Global North countries.

That continued investment in building and strengthening the science, technology, and innovation systems, and the regional and local end-to-end production capacity of Global South countries, is crucial for greater autonomy and stability in developing health technologies, promoting the generation and absorption of knowledge and technologies, and ensuring equitable access.

That the advancing climate crisis and natural disasters alters patterns of infectious diseases including zoonotic, neglected, and vector-borne diseases, and increases the likelihood of epidemics and new pandemics due to the spread, reemergence and/or emergence of pathogens, with developing countries being more vulnerable geographically, macroeconomically and in terms of access to necessary products and technologies.

That global efforts for the prevention of, preparedness for, and response to existing epidemics and Public Health Emergencies of International Concern will only be viable if we promote:

- Equitable and geographically diverse distribution of production capacity;
- Robust and sustainable investments in research and development, innovation, and production and supply processes in Global South countries, and

- Fair, transparent, and equitable mechanisms for pricing, licensing, and technology transfer that prioritize south/south, co-developed approaches to cooperation between north and South and equitable access.

**Therefore,**

**We urge:**

**First:** Allies and strategic partners to learn from the COVID-19 experience, to work together to overcome disparities in access between and within Global North and Global South countries, and to join forces, collaborate, engage in dialogue, and prioritize common issues and challenges, with the aim of enhancing international cooperation in science and technology, accelerating local and regional research and development, technology transfer, and innovation processes for the production of vaccines, treatments, diagnostics, and other health technologies to counter existing epidemic and pandemic threats in less developed countries.

**Second:** Funders, regional and multilateral organizations, cooperation agencies, public, private and not for-profit research organizations, civil society and other international community stakeholders to prioritize the development of cooperation projects and equitable access policies and funding conditions that focus on end-to-end research and development, transparency, knowledge-sharing, and technology transfer, and using and increasing production capacity for vaccines, treatments, diagnostics, and other strategic supplies in Global South countries to prevent inequities in access during a Public Health Emergency of International Concern.

**Third:** Funders, regional and multilateral organizations, cooperation agencies, civil society, and international community stakeholders to support the establishment of the Alliance for Regional and Local Production, Innovation, and Access, as discussed within the G20 framework, which aims to reduce health inequalities for neglected and socially determined diseases, health emergencies and pandemics, including disparities in access to vaccines, medications, diagnostics, and other health technologies, especially for vulnerable populations.

**Fourth:** Academic and research institutions in developing countries and the Global South to mobilize efforts to increase their contribution to research, development, innovation, and the generation of necessary knowledge and technology, forging strategic alliances, to develop appropriate policies to address current socio economic, socio-epidemiological, environmental, and health challenges.

**Fifth:** Regulatory Agencies to collaborate and build capacities in existing and emerging technologies, aiming for regulatory cooperation, convergence and harmonization, without creating barriers for countries still developing their capacities, recognizing the challenge of intellectual property and technology transfer.

**Sixth:** All stakeholders to work collaboratively, sharing data, information and knowledge, pooling cooperation efforts based on the principles of solidarity, addressing the interests of the Global South with shared responsibilities; equity, striving to overcome unnecessary and avoidable differences, through equitable benefit sharing; excellence, adopting an inclusive approach in preparedness, law, regulations aiming to achieve the highest quality in our endeavors for our populations; and respect, acknowledging the sovereignty and differences of each country with the aim to improve the health and well-being of populations in the Global South.

Rio de Janeiro, July 29-30, 2024

