

PRESS RELEASE

“Developing Member States reaffirm commitment towards an equitable pandemic accord”

Geneva – Ambassadors representing developing country Member States of WHO that identify collectively as the “Group for Equity” have reaffirmed their commitment to an equitable, balanced and robust pandemic accord as they met for the third time at the level of Permanent Representatives in Geneva on 26 October 2023.

In the meeting hosted by South Africa, the Group stressed the need to reinforce equity for a more coordinated and effective global pandemic regime. Reacting to the latest text released ten days ago, the Group noted that the document fell short of operationalisation of equity, which is a pivotal step towards a fairer and more cooperative pandemic instrument. They resolved to work towards a legally binding instrument that prioritizes equity in pandemic prevention, preparedness and response.

The Group believes that lessons derived from the COVID-19 pandemic; which resulted in millions of deaths, unprecedented economic loss, disruption to mobility and inequitable distribution of medical products including vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics should guide the negotiations. They agreed that international solidarity and inclusivity with full respect for the common but differentiated responsibility and respective capabilities of Member States are exigent in achieving equity and attaining the highest standard of health for all.

The Group remains steadfast in its commitment to strengthen the negotiating text with respect to the core equity provisions of the proposed treaty, including; Health and Care Workforce (Article 7), Research and Development (Article 9), Sustainable Production (Article 10), Transfer of Technology and Know-how (Article 11), Access and Benefit Sharing (Article 12), Supply chain and Logistics (Article 13), Implementation capacities and support (Article 19), and Financing (Article 20). They noted that only legally binding commitments in these

areas are necessary in order to realize the aspirations that led to the conception of the instrument.

In the spirit of strengthening global health governance, the Group for Equity reaffirmed their full commitment to the negotiation process including the mandate to adopt a consensus text at the 77th World Health Assembly in May 2024, provided that the INB process results in an action- and results-oriented pandemic treaty that is just, fair and equitable in terms of rights and responsibilities of all States and cognizant of the circumstances and vulnerabilities faced by developing Member States.

The Group for Equity is composed of the following countries that are actively engaged in the pandemic treaty negotiations: **1. Argentina, 2. Bangladesh, 3. Botswana, 4. Brazil, 5. China, 6. Colombia, 7. Dominican Republic, 8. Egypt, 9. El Salvador, 10. Eswatini, 11. Ethiopia, 12. Fiji, 13. Guatemala, 14. India, 15. Indonesia, 16. Iran, 17. Kenya, 18. Malaysia, 19. Mexico, 20. Namibia, 21. Pakistan, 22. Palestine, 23. Paraguay, 24. Peru, 25. The Philippines, 26. South Africa, 27. Tanzania, 28. Thailand, 29. Uruguay**

It will be noted that the Group issued their first joint statement which was delivered by the Philippines on 12 June 2023 at the 5th Meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body. The Group for Equity have convened twice previously at the level of Ambassadors hosted by Brazil and Pakistan, and coordinate frequently at the level of experts.

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