

Written input to the Seventh Meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body to draft and negotiate a WHO Convention, agreement or other international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response.

*UNITE Parliamentarians Network for Global Health (UNITE)
(formerly UNITE Global Parliamentarians Network to End Infectious Diseases)*

Introduction

On behalf of UNITE Parliamentarians Network for Global Health (UNITE), we welcome the **Intergovernmental Negotiating Body's (INB) proposal for negotiating text of the WHO Pandemic Agreement**. We appreciate the efforts to reflect the discussions of the INB at its previous meetings, as well as the informal consultations and reports of the co-facilitators. The extension of the actors involved in the negotiation process has provided multiple perspectives and will better ensure that all citizens will be protected and have access to medical countermeasures in the event of global health threats.

The role of Parliamentarians

Most democracies require the legislative body's authorization to ratify treaties. Therefore, **Parliamentarians will be crucial** for the adoption, ratification, and implementation of the future Pandemic Agreement. Members of Parliament need to be involved throughout the whole process. As such, **UNITE calls on the INB to organize a formal hearing for Parliamentarians on the negotiating text**. Successful pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response relies on **efficient national public health policies and international cooperation**.

Parliamentarians will also play a role in strengthening national health systems, a key step in achieving universal health coverage (UHC) and the health-related **UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030**, which UNITE strongly supports.

Content

UNITE welcomes the most recent changes to the draft, which considerably streamlined it, while maintaining a focus on **equity, solidarity, and transparency**. We also celebrate the inclusion of **early detection systems and disease surveillance mechanisms based on information and data sharing**, as well as responsible and equitable **financing mechanisms** to overcome resource disparities across different countries, as UNITE had recommended. However, we want to reiterate how important it is to include in the text implementation and monitorization mechanisms to guarantee clear **accountability** obligations and, therefore, the effectiveness of the legal instrument.

Furthermore, UNITE wishes to convey to the INB the importance of its proposals regarding access and benefit sharing, and transfer of technology and know-how. Access to health technologies is of utmost importance to our members and their constituencies and requires a balanced and well-thought approach. Access and benefit sharing, and transfer of technology are crucial to further innovation and economic growth across the world. However, as the COVID-19 pandemic showed, it is also essential to ensure equal access to treatments/vaccines to every citizen and to not perpetuate disparities between countries and

at the local level. This includes guaranteeing a sustainable and distributed global production capacity of medical countermeasures. Finally, access and benefit sharing, and transfer of technology and know-how are partially covered in previous international agreements, therefore, it is important not to interfere with or overwrite those treaties. As such, these topics must be handled with caution and through an evidence-based approach, especially, given the current geopolitical context and economic and financial uncertainty.

Conclusion

UNITE calls on the INB to integrate the above recommendations into the next draft and for member states to start negotiations soon, not to undermine the deadline of May 2024. The negotiations will present further opportunity to strengthen the language in the future Pandemic Accord.