Statement of the co-chairs of the Global Preparedness Monitoring Board on the decision of the United States of America to begin the process of withdrawal from the World Health Organization

13 July 2020

As co-chairs of the international body mandated to strengthen global health security through stringent independent monitoring of preparedness to tackle outbreaks, pandemics, and other health emergencies, we recognize that global threats require global solutions. The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly demonstrated that we are only as strong as our weakest link. The only way out of this devastating crisis is along the path of global solidarity and collective action, which demands a strong and effective multilateral system.

The United States of America has been critically important in building this multilateral system, and has always been forthright in its calls for reforms, while simultaneously providing strong political leadership, outstanding technical expertise, and generous financial contributions. It is through this system and the international organizations that support it, that the world has brought an end to smallpox, is close to ending polio, has dramatically cut child and maternal deaths, has reduced the burden of disease due to HIV, TB, malaria and neglected tropical diseases, has fought SARS and Ebola, and is currently tackling COVID-19.

This pandemic has clearly revealed the need for change. We acknowledge the importance of an impartial independent and comprehensive evaluation of the global response to COVID-19, as requested by the World Health Assembly in May 2020, and for strengthening of WHO based on evidence, independent expert assessment, and consensus.

We hope the United States of America will reassess this decision in the upcoming period and decide to continue to exercise its leadership to reduce the risk of pandemics and other health emergencies as a member of the World Health Organization.

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Former Prime Minister, Norway
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