

14.1 COVID-19 response

Statement:

We congratulate WHO for its commendable response to COVID-19. However, it is critical to reflect upon and learn from the experience of the Covid-19 pandemic so as to improve future emergency preparedness and response efforts through strengthening WHO's central role in global health governance.

WHO's mechanisms and governing bodies should remain the key decision-makers for governing global health, with the support of Member States. A well-funded WHO, based on assessed contributions, is key to that.

Increasing multistakeholderism in global governance, promoted by rich donors, private sector and philanthropic organizations, reduces accountability and puts at risk the balance and democratic decision-making provided by multilateralism by marginalizing less powerful states and leading to conflicts of interest.

The reliance on voluntary commitments to managing Covid-19 is insufficient. Binding technology and knowledge sharing commitments would be more effective in meeting the unprecedented demands we are facing. Initiatives like the ACT Accelerator have already shown the limitations of the public-private partnership approach, where only a few Member States and donors take crucial decisions.

WHO must work to improve solidarity and equity in the delivery of and the access to vaccines, medicines, equipment and health products, prioritizing high-risk groups worldwide. Vaccine nationalism has undermined international cooperation, with a number of high and middle income countries striking bilateral deals with manufacturers. The COVAX Facility will not be able to solve this problem.