



**Statement to the 74th Session of the World Health Assembly, 24 May to 1 June 2021**  
**on agenda item 17.1 COVID-19 response**

*We recognise WHO's important work in the COVID-19 response. However, multistakeholderism in global governance, promoted by rich donors, the private sector, and philanthropic organizations, has undermined the WHO and the multilateral system. WHO's state-driven decision making system must be strengthened, along with ensuring sufficient and flexible financing.*

*COVID-19 has shown that improving global emergency responses is insufficient to deal with this pandemic and prevent new ones. It is urgent to invest in strengthening national public health systems, as a universal and comprehensive foundation to realize health for all.*

*COVID-19 has exposed the inequalities between and within countries and the consequences of global disparities in infrastructure, access to health products, income and power. We can not rely on voluntary commitments and expect that a profit-driven market model, philanthropy and donations will solve structural health issues. As data shows, inequities in access to vaccines remain unacceptably large and the Covax Facility has failed to address this.*

*Advances in research and development should be used to increase access and reduce inequities, not to create new oligopolies under patent protection. The pillars of COVID-19 response must include: urgently implementing the TRIPS waiver, compulsory licensing, binding benefits sharing and support for local production of vaccines, diagnostics, medicines, equipment and other health products, and supporting national sovereignty in health.*

*To prevent conflict of interest, negotiations for a new Pandemic Treaty must be premised on meaningful participation of LMIC and the coordinating role of WHO. It should not be based on a global security perspective focusing solely on identifying and containing cross-boarder spread of pathogens, but should also ensure the strengthening of public health systems for effective treatment and prevention in all countries, with appropriate infrastructure and resources.*