

M8 Alliance Declaration

World Health Summit 2020 | October 27, 2020

- 1. No one is safe until all are safe.** This global health guiding principle stands at the centre of fighting COVID-19 and it stood at the centre of this year's 2020 virtual World Health Summit. Health is more than medicine, it is more than basic research, it is the essence of a functioning society. It is a political choice. **The World Health Summit calls on decision makers around the world to act according to this principle.**
- 2. The pandemic is raging worldwide.** At the World Health Summit, political leaders, high-level speakers, experts, business representatives and civil society and community voices reinforced that global solidarity embedded in strong multilateral organizations is the key to the response. Now it requires an unprecedented international effort not only to take determined public health measures forward and to strengthen scientific cooperation and research but also to address the social and economic consequences of the pandemic. **The World Health Summit stands by its deep commitment to multilateralism, health diplomacy and international cooperation in science and research. It strongly supports the increasing cooperation between international organizations for health.**
- 3. The Coronavirus pays no respect to borders.** The world must act as a global community and on many fronts. The corona pandemic is not a single-issue pandemic – it is a syndemic, impacting on societies in a multitude of ways, uncovering deep inequalities and structural disadvantages linked to a wide range of health determinants. Examples are the secondary health crises with women, children and adolescents further marginalized. Never has the principle of health in all policies that the World Health Summit stands for been more applicable. To stem the pandemic not only “at home” but everywhere, the global community must use every tool at its disposal throughout the multilateral system to leave no-one behind. There is a strong need for collaboration and efforts to protect, promote and accelerate health gains and gender equity. There can be no health security without social security and access to health services and medicines. This includes TRIPS waivers through the World Trade Organization for COVID-19 therapeutics, diagnostics and vaccines as requested by a group of countries. **The World Health Summit stands by its commitment to equity in global health.**

- 4. The required COVID-19 responses range far beyond the global health organizations** – they require determined decisions by political bodies such as the G7 and the G20, financial institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank and many other development banks. Financing global health action has already reached new dimensions – it requires billions not millions. Equitable distribution of a COVID-19 vaccine through the COVAX mechanism is estimated at \$ 35 billion. But other short-term financing measures are also required, such as debt cancellation for the poorest countries. The world is paying the price for the lack of investment in preparedness and sustainable financing models. As millions fall back into poverty, the global health system can no longer build on charity, philanthropy, and development finance – it will require new mechanisms to ensure more sharing of wealth and knowledge by investing in global public goods for health, first and foremost a people’s vaccine. **The World Health Summit is clear in its rejection of vaccine nationalism.**
- 5. The Coronavirus pays no respect to politics**, but it has uncovered deep political fault lines at national and international level, which have hampered the response to the pandemic. It has uncovered that even countries with strong health systems fail in the response to the pandemic if political decision-making is not rapid and determined. Too frequently, communities have not been involved in the response. Gender disparities have been reinforced. Infodemics are spreading rumours, conspiracies and false information. Countries with low trust in government have performed badly and many democracies were inadequately prepared for the restrictive measures they needed to implement to save lives. There is deep concern that some of the major powers are not part of the global effort to ensure a collective and effective response and to support the World Health Organization as well as new mechanisms for developing and sharing COVID-19 vaccines such as COVAX. **The World Health Summit is steadfast in its support of the WHO and calls for stronger political and financial support of the organization. It welcomes the many initiatives the WHO has initiated with partners to enable a global response. It welcomes the strong support to the WHO expressed by Germany and the European Union on occasion of the World Health Summit.**
- 6. The Coronavirus has also highlighted the fault lines in health systems around the world.** The lack of investment in UHC, in public health infrastructure and in preparedness is not only endangering the COVID-19 response – it is imperilling the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Too many people around the world cannot benefit from global health advances. Attention and treatment for other diseases is no longer available as health professionals and institutions need to focus on the pandemic, vaccination rates for children have dropped, not enough services are available to deal with the mental health and domestic violence problems that have increased with the pandemic. The lack of will in addressing non-communicable diseases has come back with a vengeance, as enhancing susceptibility to COVID-19. Health professionals – most of them women – have paid a high price. Most countries still lack strong primary health care systems and robust mechanisms for community engagement. Many have not invested in the potential of digital health. **The World Health Summit reiterates its deep commitment to Universal Health Coverage UHC through public**

financing and to innovation that makes health care more accessible and equitable.

- 7. The pandemic risk is not the only risk the world faces.** The World Health Summit 2020 program deliberated many challenges and priorities in global health other than COVID-19. The discussions clearly demonstrated the interconnectedness and accumulation of risks – for example, the interconnectedness of climate change, the ecological and the pandemic challenges or the continuous challenge of Anti-Microbial Resistance. Preparedness must include early multi-hazard warning systems - a point to consider as countries re-examine the Internal Health Regulations. **The World Health Summit will continue to promote integrated approaches to global health challenges such as ONEHEALTH and Planetary Health.**

This year's World Health Summit was different. Not only because it was virtual but because it made abundantly clear how our future is tied up together in the face of a pandemic. **No one is safe until all are safe.**