

MAYORS' DECLARATION for BETTER PANDEMIC PREVENTION, PREPAREDNESS, AND RESPONSE

PPPR = pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response

We, the mayors of the undersigned cities, in collaboration with the Global Parliament of Mayors and the Geneva Cities Hub,

Emphasizing the significant health and socio-economic impact that the Covid-19 pandemic had on our cities, communities and countries,

Recalling that during the Covid-19 pandemic, we were on the frontline of the response and played a crucial role to translate and apply national policies, regulations and measures to our complex urban habitats, to prevent and contain the spread of the disease, to inform and engage our population in relation thereto, to identify pockets of vulnerabilities on our respective territories and protect and assist those in need, to collect data, and to facilitate a swift post-pandemic socio-economic recovery,

Underlining that while the Covid-19 public health emergency of international concern has been declared over by the World Health Organization on 5 May 2023, there are still consequences and impacts we have to resolve. Furthermore, the disease persists, and is now added to the myriad of diseases impacting cities around the world. We also need to draw lessons in order to be better prepared for the next pandemic and other future health emergencies that impact our cities,

Acknowledging the fact that a pandemic should be effectively managed by a reliable interplay of global governance, with national and local governance and that while the main policies are decided at the national level, cities and metropolitan areas should be involved in designing and implementing adequate responses so as to avoid any deficit in multilevel governance of a global challenge,

Stressing that preventing, preparing, responding and recovering from future pandemics and other health emergencies in an effective manner constitutes a priority for our respective cities,

Appreciating the ongoing international efforts to enhance PPPR, in particular through the current intergovernmental negotiations on a new WHO Convention, agreement or other international instrument on PPPR, as well as on the amendments to the International Health Regulations,

Affirming that due to our proximity with our population, our knowledge of the local context, and actors, mayors are best placed to ensure effective PPPR and that therefore, the aforementioned international health instruments would be more effective and efficient if they were to fully acknowledge and include local governments in relevant provisions aimed at better preventing, preparing and responding to pandemics and other health emergencies at local level,

Stressing the key role of coordination between the national, regional and local levels, as well as of effective community engagement, in preparedness for and response to health emergencies, as per [resolution WHA75.7 on Strengthening health emergency preparedness and response in cities and urban settings](#),

Expressing concern at the lack of adequate resources at the subnational level for effective PPPR, especially in low- and middle-income countries

Call upon humanity and its global institutions to reflect upon ways and means to address deficits in rolling out vaccination that led to a blatant north-south divide during the Covid-19 pandemic, in the organization of the health sector, including hospitals, intensive care and neighborhood preventive action, as well as deficit in the accessibility and acceptance of policies in a multicultural urban context, especially in neighborhoods with limited resources,

Call upon States that currently seek to enhance PPPR to ensure that the concept of **equity**, which lies at the heart of both aforementioned international health instruments, not only applies between States but also within States, where local governments are well-placed to translate equity into reality at subnational level and make sure that no one is left behind in relation to PPPR,

Encourage States to reaffirm that **urban settings are especially vulnerable** to infectious disease outbreaks and epidemics and that local governments have therefore an important role in preventing, preparing for and responding to pandemics and health emergencies,

Encourage States to acknowledge that **urban planning** is a key element of preparedness and response, as formally acknowledged by [resolution WHA73.8 \(2020\) on strengthening preparedness for health emergencies: implementation of the International Health Regulations](#),

Call upon States to ensure that both international health instruments are guided, among others, by the **whole-of-government approach** in order to ensure policy coherence and effective implementation among all sectors and levels of government, especially in relation to one-health approaches,

Call upon States to explicitly refer to the crucial **role that local governments play** in engaging their population, in particular to identify and protect individuals and groups of individuals in vulnerable situations – be it in terms of physical or socio-economic vulnerability, to raise awareness, provide them with the right information, fight disinformation and ensure adherence to the measures related to PPPR,

Call upon States to recognize that effective PPPR is a complex undertaking that needs to rely on a **multisectoral approach** and that local governments are well-placed to implement this multi-sectoral approach at their level,

Encourage States to facilitate the **involvement and contributions** of local governments in **international processes** relating to PPPR,

Call upon States to enhance support to local governments in terms of **resources, expertise and capacities**, so that they may effectively translate and implement the national policies and regulations at local level for effective PPPR.