

Statement to the Fourth Meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body - Consideration and Negotiation of the Zero Draft of the WHO Convention

Speaking to the fourth meeting of the INB , Senior Policy Advisor Jaume Vidal made the following statement on Agenda Item 3: 'Consideration and Negotiation of the Zero Draft of the WHO Convention, Agreement, or Other International Instrument on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response (WHO CA+)' .

Health Action International (HAI) is pleased to again address a session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body and commends the efforts of Member States, secretariat and others including public interest-driven civil society, that have made it possible for us to discuss this zero draft. A welcome and timely development as the stakes remain high and urgency unabated.

While we believe that the document constitutes a good first step to substantive negotiations and provides an acceptable framework for discussion, it is lacking on specific clauses and explicit language to fulfil the global need for equitable, universal and sustainable access to health technologies, an indispensable step for an effective response to pandemics and health emergencies. We expect governments to uphold their pledges for greater cooperation between parties and ambitious scale up of technology transfer initiatives, driven only by health needs.

Like other stakeholders, we must share our concern about the parallel processes currently underway regarding a response to pandemics and health emergencies, and the risk of overlapping and straining the ability of all parties to adequately follow and contribute. Also, we call on governments and other actors to acknowledge mistakes made in the institutional response to the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of inclusion, transparency and legitimacy which hindered the ability of the international community to deliver assistance when and where needed.

Lastly, we would like to strongly reaffirm the legitimacy of public interest civil society to participate in this and other international processes, not only as providers of expertise and knowledge but as recipients of a mandate to transmit the voice and grievances of communities, individuals and parties too often overlooked, persecuted or taken for granted by far too many governments and organisations.

-End-

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