

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Parliamentarians UNITE in Berlin to Sign Global Statement Supporting the Pandemic Agreement**

**October 16th, 2024, Berlin, Germany** – Parliamentarians from across the globe gathered at the UNITE Global Summit in Berlin to sign a statement in support of the Pandemic Agreement. The statement, signed by the President of UNITE, members of its board, and parliamentarians around the world, marks a significant commitment from parliamentarians to strengthen pandemic preparedness, response, and equitable access to health.

*“Parliamentarians are the voice of the people and have a crucial responsibility in safeguarding public health,”* said Ricardo Baptista Leite, President of UNITE. *“The WHO Pandemic Agreement represents a historic opportunity to prevent pandemics and strengthen our global preparedness and response capabilities. By signing this statement, we are not only showing our support for the agreement but also pledging to ensure that its principles of equity, solidarity, and global cooperation are fully realized in every nation.”*

The UNITE Global Summit, this year held in collaboration with the World Health Summit (WHS), is a high level gathering with a unique convergence of global parliamentarians, civil society leaders, and health experts. The summit aims to translate discussions into actionable policy priorities. It focuses on critical health challenges under four main pillars: Human Rights & Equitable Access to Health, Global Health Architecture & Security, Strengthening of Healthcare Systems, and Sustainable Financing for Health. The signing of the Global Parliamentary Statement in Support of the Pandemic Agreement is one of the summit’s key highlights, demonstrating the critical role of parliamentarians in ensuring global health security and safeguarding populations against future pandemics.

The Pandemic Agreement, currently under negotiation by WHO Member States, aims to address gaps exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the threats posed by mpox and other disease outbreaks. It seeks to strengthen global collaboration on pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response. This statement represents Parliamentarians’ commitment to protect their fellow citizens by ensuring that all countries, regardless of resources, have equitable access to the tools, capacities, resources, and healthcare required during pandemics, including to vaccines, treatments, medical supplies, and vital healthcare information.

WHO Director-General welcomed this strong show of parliamentary support. *“The WHO Pandemic Agreement represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to build a stronger, fairer, and more prepared global health system,”* said Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. *“By signing this statement, parliamentarians from around the world are showing their commitment to protecting lives from future pandemics and ensuring equitable access to vaccines, treatments, diagnostics and other health tools for every country, particularly those with fewer resources.”*

As representatives of their citizens, parliamentarians worldwide are uniquely positioned to advocate for the conclusion of a meaningful Pandemic Agreement and for its ratification and implementation afterwards. The Global Parliamentary Statement emphasizes four key commitments:

1. **Equity at the Core:** Ensuring equitable access to pandemic-related health tools based on public health need for everyone, especially countries with fewer resources.
2. **Global Solidarity:** Strengthening international cooperation to build resilient health systems that can prevent and respond to pandemics.
3. **Legislative Action:** Advocating for the ratification and implementation of the Pandemic Agreement within national legislatures, as appropriate.
4. **Combating Misinformation:** Providing communities with evidence-based health information to counter the spread of harmful misinformation.

Baptista Leite further emphasized the importance of collective action: *“The challenges we face today demand a global response. No single country can prevent or combat pandemics alone. The WHO Pandemic Agreement is an essential step forward in ensuring that every nation has the tools, resources, and capabilities to respond to future health threats.”*

The WHO Pandemic Agreement needs to continue to garner broad international support from governments, global health organizations, and civil society. It reflects a shared understanding that pandemics know no borders and that global solidarity is essential for safeguarding the health and well-being of all people. The agreement also underscores the importance of sustainable financing, research and development, and capacity-building efforts to ensure that countries can respond swiftly and effectively to health emergencies.

As part of their commitment, parliamentarians will work closely with WHO and other international organizations to ensure that the Pandemic Agreement is implemented in a way that benefits all countries, particularly those with limited resources. The statement signed in Berlin is expected to act as a catalyst for global parliamentary action, fostering collaboration and solidarity among nations.

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