



## **AFRICAN ALLIANCE STATEMENT ON PANDEMIC AGREEMENT NEGOTIATIONS**

### **WE REFUSE TO CELEBRATE SCRAPS WHILE INJUSTICE FESTERS**

*Johannesburg, South Africa – 16 April 2025*

After three years of negotiations, the conclusion of the Pandemic Agreement marks not a triumph, but a sobering reminder of the international community's chronic inability and unwillingness to put justice at the heart of pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response.

The African Alliance refuses to applaud this development, which we consider to be a mere marker of administrative process, not an achievement of progress.

Let us be clear: what emerged from Geneva this week is not the bold, equity-driven instrument the world was promised. It is a shell, hollowed out by rich-country interests and sanitized of the legally binding obligations that could have prevented a repeat of the horrors of COVID-19.

This is not equity. This is erasure.

From the beginning, this negotiation process was marred by opacity, exclusion, and a patronizing disregard for the very communities that bore the brunt of the last pandemic. The final text of the agreement sidesteps, defers, and waters down critical provisions, particularly those that would have ensured timely and equitable access to vaccines, diagnostics, and therapeutics. Once again, the mantra of "no one is safe until everyone is safe" rings hollow in the mouths of those who continue to hoard power, profit, and platforms.

We join *Médecins Sans Frontières* (MSF) and others in welcoming any forward motion toward global cooperation. But let us not mistake a step for a sprint.

The Pandemic Agreement is a framework, not a fix. The real battle now shifts to the so-called Pathogen Access and Benefit-Sharing (PABS) system. And we are watching closely.

This annex **must not** replicate the same undemocratic practices that poisoned the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body process: backroom edits, rushed timelines, Member States negotiating with bureaucrats instead of each other, and a chronic lack of transparency. If this next phase fails to enshrine legally binding obligations—on access, benefit-sharing, financing, and technology transfer—then this entire process will have been an expensive performance for the powerful.

We say this with absolute clarity: **if the world cannot commit to binding equity, then it is committing to repeating injustice.**

Communities across the Majority World—who have sequenced pathogens, shared data, and opened their doors to research in good faith—have repeatedly seen that generosity exploited by systems rigged for profit. It is unconscionable that the Pandemic Agreement provides no guaranteed access to life-saving tools during outbreaks or PHEICs. The refusal to require technology transfer, fund prevention efforts, or decentralize R&D reflects the same colonial logic that has always placed African lives at the bottom of the global health hierarchy.

**To the Member States of the WHO:** do not pat yourselves on the back for arriving late to a fire you helped start.

**To the governments of the Majority World:** align with your communities, not with former colonizers cloaked in diplomacy.

**To civil society:** this is not the time to be neutral. This is the time to be loud and not accept any “middle ground” that will ultimately visit death in the communities we claim to speak for.

The African Alliance stands with communities across the Majority World who demand more than crumbs. We demand a pandemic accord that reflects not just cooperation, but **compensation**. Not just rhetoric, but **redistribution**. Not just access, but **autonomy**.

**We will not trade justice for jargon. We will not celebrate delay as diplomacy. And we will not stop until global health is governed by equity—not empire.**