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DRAFT RESOLUTION

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND   
ITS IMPACT ON THE HEMISPHERE

(Agreed upon by the General Committee on November 12, 2021,   
and forwarded to the plenary for consideration)

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

ACKNOWLEDGING THAT its solidarity with the peoples of the Americas who continue to face the unprecedented effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on their lives, livelihoods, and economies;

RECOGNIZING WITH ALARM that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable people in the region;

RECOGNIZING ALSO that the economic and social crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic has widened the already existing social and gender gaps;

AWARE that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the inherent and structural vulnerabilities of small island developing and low-lying coastal states due to their small size, financial and human resources constraints, and susceptibility to exogenous shocks;

RECOGNIZING that the COVID-19 pandemic has deepened deficiencies and inequities in getting access to essential medicines, such as pharmaceuticals, vaccines, and other health technologies, affecting the response capacity of health systems and limiting the provision of health services;

BEARING IN MIND that the health crisis has revealed the high dependence of Latin America and the Caribbean on imports of medicines and other health technologies from outside the region, the vulnerability of global supply chains in emergency situations, and the imbalance in vaccine research, development, and production capacity in the Americas;

RECOGNIZING that in general, the pandemic has deepened regional weaknesses in the planning, preparation, detection, and coordination response in public health;

BEARING IN MIND that in the extraordinary session of the Permanent Council to consider the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact in the Hemisphere, held on September 30, 2021, representative heads of state and government, and ministers of health, together with leading global and hemispheric health authorities emphasized agreed on the need for coordinated actions to improve the region' response to the COVID-19 pandemic and future health crises;

REAFFIRMING that joint and coordinated hemispheric solidarity and cooperation will help slow and prevent the spread of COVID and contribute to strengthening the regional response and recovery efforts; and recognizing the role that the Organization of American States, the Pan American Health Organization, and subregional health institutions in the Hemisphere, especially the Caribbean Public Health Agency, can play in this matter;

CONCERNED at the lack of equitable distribution of vaccines, which resulted in developing countries depending on charitable donations of vaccines;

RECOGNIZING the urgent need for establishing production facilities in developing countries that meet the technical requirements for the production of safe, effective, quality, and inexpensive vaccines and other health related technologies which may be accomplished through regional collaboration and the exchange of relevant scientific and technical knowledge on mutually agreed terms;

CONSIDERING that it is necessary to achieve greater political agreement in the region, for the support of structural and transformative actions to build resilient health systems that are capable of managing current and future threats, while promoting universal access to health and universal coverage of health for its populations;

REAFFIRMING the importance of financing and technical assistance to allow member states, especially the most vulnerable nations, to mitigate the economic losses caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and to prepare for future pandemics and other threats to health;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT resolution CP/RES. 1151 (2280/20) “Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic”, approved by the Permanent Council in the virtual extraordinary session held on April 16, 2020, and resolution CP/RES. 1165 (2312/21) “The equitable distribution of vaccines against COVID-19”, approved by the Permanent Council in the virtual regular session held on February 17, 2021;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT ALSO resolutions CD59.R3 “Increase in the production capacity of essential medicines and health technologies” and CD59.R13 “Reinvigorating immunizations as a public good for universal health” approved by the 59th Directing Council of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), in its session of September, 2021; and

REITERATING its continued gratitude to the Pan American Organization, the World Health Organization, the member states, and the regional health agencies, including the Caribbean Public Health Agency, for their work to protect the health of the peoples of the Americas at all times, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic,

RESOLVES:

1. To instruct the Permanent Council to continue facilitating regular dialogue and updates from the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), with a view to strengthening hemispheric coordination and cooperation to effectively combat COVID-19 and address its devastating socio-economic effects.
2. To urge member states to promote mutual hemispheric solidarity in the development and acquisition of safe, accessible and effective vaccines and other health technologies, and within this framework, invite member states to support the development of voluntary regional platforms, in alignment with global multilateral efforts, such as the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator; the Regional Platform to Advance the Manufacturing of COVID-19 Vaccines and other Health Technologies in the Americas, launched by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO); as well as the initiative supported by the World Health Organization (WHO) and PAHO on Technology Transfer for Production of mRNA Vaccines in the Americas, and the COVID-19 Technology Access Pool (C-TAP) initiative supported by the WHO.
3. To urge member states to make the greatest possible efforts to continue strengthening public investment in health, which allows for improvement and expansion of national and regional capacities for the development and production of raw materials, vaccines, diagnostic tests and therapeutics, in order to achieve a speedy recovery of regional health sectors and economies, and overcome our region’s vulnerability and external dependency during global health emergencies, allowing the achievement of adequate preparedness and response capabilities in our region.
4. To urge member states to take strategic and targeted measures to achieve resilient health systems by rapidly advancing towards access to and coverage of health, addressing systemic and structural deficiencies of health systems exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, tackling health inequities and environmental risk factors, ensuring the adoption and consolidation of innovations introduced in health systems during the pandemic response.
5. To call on the member states to apply consistent economic policies that contribute in a sustained way to creating jobs, increasing economic productivity and promoting innovation, including by strengthening literacy, digital infrastructure and technologies.
6. To call on the member states and permanent observers to coordinate common positions in Multilateral Organizations aimed at facilitating jointly the post-pandemic recovery, paying special attention to the economic, productive, and financial difficulties aggravated by the pandemic.
7. To endorse the role of extensive COVID-19 immunization as a global public good and again urge member states and those permanent observers with the capacity to do so, to take measures to facilitate the equitable distribution of vaccines in the Hemisphere, considering that accelerating the equitable and necessary access to safe, effective, affordable, and quality COVID-19 vaccines is a key element in overcoming this emergency.
8. To call on international financial institutions to provide concessionary financing to developing countries, particularly small states, based on vulnerability, to mitigate economic losses caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. **[USA will present a footnote]**
9. To encourage member states to implement communication and social participation strategies aimed at regaining the population's confidence in vaccines in furtherance of the achievement of immunity in each of them.
10. To urge member states, according to their context and national priorities, within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and particularly within the global context of immunization and requirements for international travel, to apply, as appropriate, measures to facilitate the free movement of travelers, in accordance with the International Health Regulations and bearing in mind the recommendations and guidance of the WHO regarding immunization and travels.

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