

Pandemic Agreement – INB8 (Feb 19) Intervention
World Health Organization Meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body

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The Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security is an independent academic institution that works to protect people's health from epidemics and disasters and build resilient societies. Member States, We all have a common, mutual interest in a safer, more equitable world. This Agreement is of extraordinary importance to the world, and we urge all states to do what they can to use this momentum and energy to come to an Agreement by the time of the World Health Assembly.

We welcome the sharing of progressed articles with relevant stakeholders and look forward to reviewing the proposed designs for PABS. Inclusion of PABS in the Pandemic Agreement is the chance to enshrine a legal obligation to share samples and sequence data rapidly and comprehensively, but – for justice and for global health security – such obligations must be on equal footing with the equitable sharing of benefits arising from their use.

The current governance regime for samples without a specialized international instrument is bilateral and transactional, untenable for both equity and science. PABS is the answer: a multilateral system that for countries both embeds and decouples access from benefits, enshrining mutual obligations that rebuild trust in international law and the international system, and realize the right to health.

For recipients, the use of standard material transfer agreements to guarantee a minimum of 20% real-time production of pandemic-related products transforms equity from rhetoric to action and a reasonable system for recipient contribution would assist in funding global capacities for pandemic prevention, preparedness and response and the only true transaction within PABS: science for science.

To that end, we have a forthcoming open letter, co-signed by more than 270 scientists around the world, calling on Member States to include PABS in the Pandemic Agreement: ensuring science for science as well as a mechanism that substantively realizes equity and human rights.

Thank you and we wish you a successful two weeks ahead.