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## **AFREC Resolution on the Global Pandemic and the Health Sectors**

### **AFREC in virtual session on 18 and 19 August 2021, NOTES WITH GRAVE CONCERN:**

1. Whereas the COVID-19 pandemic has unleashed unprecedented health, social and economic havoc in the whole world, albeit with differential impact on countries, economic sectors and vicious sections of the population;
2. The gravity of the impact on African and Arab countries resulting in the collapse of their already fragile productive and distributive capacity;
3. The fragility and inadequacies of the region's health systems – the deplorably low health personnel-population ratio, the limited health facilities which are inaccessible to many sections of the population, the low level of medical supplies - which are all reflections of the low budgetary allocation to the health sector and refusal to see health as a public good that is an entitlement to every human being;
4. The pandemic has exposed even more the fragility of the public health systems that should be leading campaigns in the face of epidemics and pandemics, and playing a lead role in counteracting misinformation about vaccines and other measures to contain and end the pandemic;
5. The pandemic has exposed prevailing inequalities and inequities by impacting more harshly on health and care workers, women, migrants, people living with disabilities;
6. The exacerbation of health, gender, economic and other inequalities and heightening of decent work deficits, particularly among health workers, deploring, in particular, the weaknesses of employment benefits, sickness benefits, OSH systems, gender-pay gaps and social protection;
7. Whereas the low-income countries have minimal access to vaccines and are still unable to fully vaccinate even the most at-risk health workers, who often work to save lives amidst severe shortages of PPEs and other medical supplies and facilities;
8. Despite the global efforts to recover faster and better through public health campaigns, enhanced medical resource allocation and vaccinations, African and Arab countries remain lowest in vaccine access due to obnoxious Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights and other factors working against the fundamental right and the efforts to achieve SDG 4 on health for all;

### **AFREC hereby CLAIMS that:**

1. Immediate global action should deliver on timely financial support and sustainable vaccine access to African and Arab countries and other low-income countries and, in this connection, the international community should waive all rules limiting the sustainable production and distribution of vaccines and other needed supplies and ensure universal vaccine access;

2. A waiver of the TRIPS to enable an unfettered and equitable vaccine production and distribution to ensure access for all countries;
3. Strengthening social dialogue at all levels to become a vehicle for re-engineering social and work relations to deliver on the critical needs of human-centred development and growth and addressing as a matter of priority the heightened inequalities exposed and exacerbated by the pandemic;
4. Strengthening the legislative and institutional basis of social protection for all peoples, in line with the decent work principles, SDGs and objectives of the ILO Centenary Declaration on the future of work and in furtherance of the ITUC quest for a New Social Contract; and
5. Strengthening support and regulatory mechanisms for the health and other front line workers paying due attention to income support that addresses gender-based income disparity, OSH legislation and mechanisms that address the limitations and social protection for them and all workers.