



**MESSAGE FROM THE SOUTH CENTRE AT THE LAUNCH OF THE
"SOLIDARITY CALL TO ACTION" BY THE PRESIDENT OF COSTA RICA
AND THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE WHO**

The COVID 19 pandemic has produced the largest global health, economic and social crisis in the last 100 years. It is an exceptional, unprecedented situation.

That is why the initiative of the President of Costa Rica, supported by the Director-General of WHO and many countries, is also unprecedented and timely.

The architecture for access to medicines and vaccines, which is already complex to manage in normal times, requires even more structured actions in times of a pandemic by the scale of the demand and the urgency in meeting it.

The only valid solution in a pandemic like the current one is to combine and promote different mechanisms and interventions simultaneously and in an accelerated manner.

This call for solidarity to bring together the technologies and treatments related to COVID 19 is part of the necessary solution. It complements other available instruments for States to facilitate access to prevention and treatment for the population, including through the use of the flexibilities of the WTO TRIPS Agreement.

The South Centre appreciates the fact that this call is based on the principles of international solidarity, complementarity with other national policies, universality and transparency, and that it aims at ensuring that the technologies needed to address the pandemic are considered, as a matter of principle, global public goods.

Importantly, this call for action stresses, in particular, the need for governments to "take steps to promote innovation, remove barriers and facilitate the open exchange of knowledge, intellectual property and data necessary for the detection, prevention, treatment and response to COVID-19." It, thus, covers patented as well as non-patented knowledge, such as clinical data and know-how.

This call must be accompanied by the development of a concrete WHO mechanism to ensure that the required technologies and data are made available, and that safe and effective medicines, vaccines and other products are manufactured on a large scale, distributed rapidly, equitably and affordably in all countries.

As the South Centre expressed in its message to the 73rd WHA, the crisis of COVID 19 is also an opportunity for WHO member countries to reinvent the Organization, making it a stronger and more independent international public agency with the capacity to manage and coordinate global health actions, in normal times and in times of health crises. It is necessary to provide the WHO with instruments to implement its resolutions and initiatives such as the Solidarity Call To Action launched today.