

## **International Commission of Jurists**

### **Oral Statement & Written Submission to the WHO Intergovernmental Negotiating Body**

*Public Consultations 12-13 April 2022 (Delivered Online, Submitted via Email)*

**Chair,**

The COVID-19 pandemic has over the last two years ended the lives of millions of persons across the world, and, for those of us who have either avoided transmission or recovered, upended almost every aspect of our lives. The many and varied impacts of both COVID-19, and many of the State responses to it, have resulted in what the UN Secretary General [described as](#) a “pandemic of human rights abuses”.

It is in this context that we draw the INB’s attention to the need to ensure the very foundations of the Pandemic Treaty are firmly grounded in human rights. To this effect we, alongside other members of the Civil Society Alliance for Human Rights in the Pandemic Treaty, have published [10 Human Rights Principles for a Pandemic Treaty](#), which we submit should guide the INB’s deliberation.

Second, we emphasize the fundamental importance of a legitimately negotiated, drafted and implemented Pandemic Treaty to advance future efforts to ensure adequate preparedness for and responsiveness to pandemics and other public health emergencies.

Without [full, meaningful and effective participation of civil society organizations](#), the Treaty will not embody the vital lessons learned through the experiences of those who have courageously fought for the protection of human rights and the rule of law throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chair,

While welcoming the opportunity to make this brief intervention we therefore strongly recommend that the INB dramatically widen and extend its efforts to ensure public participation.

Finally, we note with great disappointment the ongoing impasse in relation to the waiver of intellectual property rights in order to ensure globally equitable access to the full range of diagnostics, medications, vaccines, therapeutics and other relevant health products required for the containment, prevention and mitigation of COVID-19. States should agree that, when faced with a pandemic, [their human rights obligations](#) require cooperation and coordination for the sharing of intellectual property so that in future pandemics it will not take over two years, 500 million cases of illness and six million deaths for serious collective action to protect the rights to health and life of all persons.

I thank you.