

## M8 Alliance Declaration

World Health Summit 2023, October 15-17, Berlin

### **M8 Alliance and World Health Summit Leadership Call for Fair and Strong Multilateralism**

Universal health coverage in times of climate change:  
Resilience requires a 'team earth' approach.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 3 "Good Health and Wellbeing" identifies Universal Health Coverage as a fundamental right and mechanism to achieve this goal.

However, the health of populations worldwide is additionally threatened by increasing speed of climate change and the connection between health and climate is becoming ever more obvious. Urgent action is mandatory. Reports on floods, fires, heat waves and droughts due to drastic changes in the global climate and local weather conditions fill the news nearly every day. Populations and policymakers still hesitate to embrace the necessary and substantial responses required at all levels of society.

As researchers and scientists in the broad field of health, the M8 Alliance of Academic Health Centers, Universities and National Academies, the academic backbone of the World Health Summit, calls for unprecedented action to curb the dramatic effects of global warming. The M8 Alliance, as members of the academic stakeholder group represented at the World Health Summit 2023, pushes for meaningful dialogue with politics, civil society and the private sector, also represented at the World Health Summit 2023, to arrive at collective and urgent solutions.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we experienced the fast and overwhelming impact of the virus. This triggered reactions of unprecedented speed and scope; however, many were strong, nationalist responses that weakened international cooperation and prevention. Accordingly, response measures across the globe were fragmented. This reduced the effectiveness of the worldwide fight against the virus, and held back the mission to reach the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It also reduced trust in national and international actors, with ongoing negative impacts on our ability to face future challenges. Furthermore, we have moved to a stage of the 'panic and neglect' cycle, in which we witness increasing disinterest and reduced funding, e.g. for pandemic preparedness and response.

In this situation, the M8 Alliance calls for three crucial developments to improve global health and to respond to the growing threats from climate change:

- 1. Move from fragmentation to cooperation and integration**
- 2. Address disparities within and between countries**
- 3. Address the needs of the most vulnerable**

### **1. Move from fragmentation to cooperation and integration**

The physical and biological mechanisms behind climate change and health threats are truly global in nature and affect people worldwide. There is a disproportionate impact on the Global South, where people are least able to deal with the deleterious effects. The situation requires a bold and united response across all sectors. In this process, as a moral obligation and in the interest of global common good, strong players and nations have to be accountable and accept their responsibility to support the vulnerable nations. The size and urgency of the threats must help us to overcome historical partitions and new geopolitical divisions.

If we cannot manage to act jointly in the face of overwhelming threats and generate a 'team earth' spirit, everyone will suffer.

### **2. Addressing disparities within and between countries**

Excessive disparities in wealth, economic power and access to health services within and between countries stand in the way of achieving Universal Health Coverage, a fundamental right as recognized by the SDGs, and dealing with the climate crisis. Powerful individuals, companies and nations may feel that they are, individually, able to secure good health coverage and thereby shield themselves from the negative consequences of the climate crisis for health. This attitude is misguided. Regardless of all local and regional diversities, we live in a connected world; there is no plan B for the lucky ones, and disadvantage to any community results in cumulative disadvantage to us all.

It is in our own best interests to unite our efforts now, to leave behind a livable planet for all of our future generations.

### **3. Address the needs of the most vulnerable**

"No one is safe, until everyone is safe" was made popular during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, both climate disasters and health crises have the greatest impact on those with the most limited resources. The effect hits them first and hardest. Critical economic conditions prevent poorer people and nations from protecting themselves against future threats, while sustaining the greatest burden of current threats. We have to establish true partnerships and international cooperation, which depend on global support in these most dire times of need.

Solidarity is essential for our future global health.

**The M8 Alliance and the World Health Summit leadership call for fair and strong multilateralism to improve universal health coverage and thus resilience to climate change.**

Berlin, October 2023