



2nd Special Video Conference on the COVID-19 Pandemic

(Online, 25 May 2021)

Statement of the 2nd Special Video Conference on the COVID-19 Pandemic

1. We, the representatives of 24 political parties from 19 countries, gathered virtually for the 2nd Special Video Conference on the COVID-19 Pandemic. The meeting was held on 25 May 2021 and hosted by the ICAPP Secretariat as a follow-up conference to the 1st Special Video Conference on the COVID-19 Pandemic, which was held on 22 May 2020. The meeting was organized over an online platform due to social distancing rules and travel restrictions. The conference was structured into two sessions: the first session focused on “Building a More Effective Regional and Global Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic” and the second session on “Achieving an Inclusive Economic Recovery in the Post-COVID-19 Environment.”
2. We shared developments of the pandemic situation in our respective countries since the 1st Special Video Conference on the COVID-19 Pandemic. We revisited discussions from the previous special conference, which emphasized the need to engage in joint efforts to combat the pandemic. We also expressed deep gratitude to the scientific community and its collaborators for the development and production of several COVID-19 vaccines, which have renewed hopes for the future. We also thanked healthcare workers, volunteers, international organizations, and civil societies for their dedication and endless efforts in serving the community. The COVID-19 pandemic is the greatest common challenge of our times that humanity faces, which requires a collective and coordinated global response. Saving humanity has to be the top priority. Swift, easy, and equitable access to vaccines is the need of the hour, therefore, there is no room for any notion of ‘vaccine nationalism.’
3. We committed to encouraging our respective governments to expand equitable access to medical supplies such as vaccines, diagnostics, and therapeutics across all countries and people while leaving no one behind. We also stressed the need for global coordination in increasing vaccine production and distribution as many countries in vulnerable situations still have limited or no availability of vaccines.
4. We underlined the importance of close collaboration among public and private sectors to successfully track, trace, and treat patients affected by COVID-19 as well as to implement the public health and social measures recommended by the World Health Organization. Furthermore, we pledged to promote funding of research and development in both sectors to enable a more integrated response from the government and partnering private entities through the use of new technologies and infrastructure.

5. We recognized the need for collaboration with international organizations such as the United Nations specialized agencies, including the World Health Organization and World Bank, to enhance coordinated emergency response and strengthen capacity of public health systems. We called upon all political parties, international organizations, and governments to take joint action in regularly examining and refining preparedness and response measures that can mitigate the negative impact of COVID-19 on the existing economic, political, and social structures.
6. We emphasized the crucial role of political parties in facilitating, envisioning, and adapting to the post-COVID-19 economic landscape. We agreed to continue exchanging information and best practices in our respective countries to strengthen international cooperation during the pandemic and to achieve an inclusive and sustainable economic recovery for all countries. Given the dire situation caused by the pandemic, we encourage political parties to launch mass awareness campaigns in their respective countries to remove popular misconceptions, so that ‘vaccine hesitancy’ is no longer an impediment in combating the COVID-19 pandemic.
7. We acknowledged the importance of targeted funding for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to create stability in local communities and accelerate recovery. Moreover, we called on our governments and political parties to work together on devising effective programs and fiscal responses to help SMEs overcome disruptions in the global supply chain and navigate the operational stress caused by the pandemic.
8. We took note of the disproportionate negative impact of the pandemic on the vulnerable groups of society such as youth, women, migrants, elderly, and persons with disabilities. We also noted with concern the alarming percentage of informal workers who have experienced income loss from the beginning of the crisis as reported by the United Nations. To achieve the common goal of decent work and to protect the livelihoods of marginalized populations, we urged for the establishment of robust social protection mechanisms for both formal and informal economies.
9. We pledged to continue the strong cooperation among ICAPP Members to coordinate regional and international action plans to counter COVID-19. Furthermore, we committed to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals in the 2030 Agenda into our respective national, regional, and international response plans as well as the work of the ICAPP as much as possible. We also agreed to keep the conversation channels open amongst our respective political parties to share further developments of the pandemic and insights on overcoming the crisis.

10. We expressed our gratitude to the representatives of World Health Organization and the World Bank for participating in the conference as keynote speakers to provide their invaluable insights and expertise. We further noted our appreciation to the International Vaccine Institute and United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific for sharing their perspectives and important work with the participants. We also thanked the Permanent Conference of Political Parties of Latin America and the Caribbean (*COPPPAL*) for attending the conference and presenting on the situation and action plans in Latin America and the Caribbean.

11. We expressed our appreciation to the ICAPP Secretariat for the successful organization of the conference.

Adopted on 25 May 2021.