

APRIL 2022 BRIEFING

Pandemic Treaty

(WHO convention, agreement or other international instrument on pandemic preparedness)



Why is this process relevant to civil society and communities?

- Civil society and communities played a crucial role in ensuring effective and humane COVID-19 responses. Their role in pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response (and in health responses more generally) should be safeguarded and strengthened.
- Already vulnerable, marginalised and criminalised communities (including migrant workers, people who use drugs, sex workers, people living with HIV, persons with disabilities) have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 and COVID-19 responses; which in many cases featured misuses of emergency executive powers and securitisation of the health response. Their meaningful involvement in the process is key to avoiding repeating those shortcomings.
- Everyone has the right to take part in the formulation (and implementation) of policy at the international and regional levels. This right to participate in international forums, grounded in international human rights law and standards, is emphasised in recent UN guidance and by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.
- This requires allowing and proactively encouraging meaningful participation of stakeholders who will be affected by these policies in a transparent and accountable manner, access to information, and the creation of permanent structures for the continuous participation of civil society and community actors.
- This engagement must reflect both the expertise and diversity of civil society and communities, ensuring civil society organisations in different parts of the world are represented and, in particular, recognising the critical importance of the right to self-representation and the distinct voice of communities. In addition, there must be clear mechanisms for civil society and communities to engage their broader constituencies, with adequate resourcing to effectively convene and facilitate the participation of community and civil society voices throughout the process.

