



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:  
Jennifer Draiss, [jennifer@phoenixzonesinitiative.org](mailto:jennifer@phoenixzonesinitiative.org)

## Medical and Public Health Professionals Call on World Health Organization to Advance Pandemic Prevention Treaty International Instrument Could Help Prevent the Next Pandemic

May 18, 2022 (Albuquerque, NM) -- In advance of the Seventy-fifth World Health Assembly, Phoenix Zones Initiative (PZI) and other medical and public health professionals have called upon the World Health Organization (WHO) to advance an international instrument that would prevent the next pandemic.

In an [open letter](#) to the WHO and the International Negotiating Body (INB), healthcare and other professionals have encouraged decision makers to maintain a focus on primary prevention, including efforts to reduce the risk for the emergence of novel animal-borne pathogens.

“We applaud Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus and the WHO for their attention to the need for a global instrument centered on pandemic prevention and response,” said PZI’s CEO, Dr. Hope Ferdowsian. “We urge them to address the root causes of pandemics by adopting measures that center on social and ecological justice and that attend to epidemiological drivers such as climate change, industrial development, and inequities that disproportionately affect women, children, and the global majority.”

“Resulting policies must abate human, animal, and environmental exploitation through transformative interdisciplinary strategies, legal remedies, and public engagement,” Ferdowsian noted.

A growing body of evidence confirms that ecosystem and habitat loss and degradation, biodiversity loss, encroachment into wildlife habitats, the commercial trade in wild animals, and intensive animal farming increase the risk of emerging infectious disease outbreaks.

Since January 1, 2020, COVID-19 has claimed more than six million human lives worldwide, and there have been more than 500 million confirmed cases of COVID-19 in 222 countries and territories. [Excess mortality](#) due to the COVID-19 pandemic has exceeded 18 million.

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The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the risk for human rights violations, has deepened social, economic, and health disparities, and has strained the healthcare system.

Animals in farms, laboratories, and the wild have also suffered due to the pandemic.

An international treaty focused on pandemic prevention would reduce the risk for another pandemic by aligning local, national, and global action in a united approach.

In their open letter, medical, public health, and other professionals voiced strong support for an international pandemic prevention agreement rooted in a just One Health approach that addresses the interdependence of human, animal, and planetary health and wellbeing.

Signatories emphasized the importance of an instrument that mirrors the approach set forth in the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, since it would provide intergovernmental bodies, national governments, and other stakeholders with the tools needed to ensure the health of all.

In 2021, the World Health Assembly [agreed](#) to launch a global process to draft and negotiate a convention, agreement, or other international instrument under the Constitution of the World Health Organization to strengthen pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response.

This year's session of the World Health Assembly will focus on the theme of "Health for Peace, Peace for Health," and it will run from May 22-28 in Geneva. The [agenda](#) is expected to include attention to preparedness for health emergencies, among other issues.

### About Phoenix Zones Initiative

Phoenix Zones Initiative is a global nonprofit organization that advances the interconnected rights, health, and wellbeing of people, animals, and the planet through education, research, and advocacy. Led by physicians and a diverse team, Phoenix Zones Initiative focuses on widespread ethical and structural change. Phoenix Zones Initiative advances social, economic, and environmental policy to uplift the most vulnerable and marginalized, and the organization also provides resources so that others can do the same. Follow Phoenix Zones Initiative on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [YouTube](#), and the [Phoenix Zones Initiative](#) website.