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Excellencies, Respected Leaders,

Never has our world wanted to save so many lives. So many livelihoods.

But in every country we have not only been struggling against the virus – but also against the extraordinary and rising inequality that is as deadly as the virus itself.

And it is man-made policies that made us so unsafe and unequal in the first place.

Let us not forget that even before we entered the pandemic – 10,000 people were dying each day for lack of access to affordable healthcare.

Let's not forget that even before the pandemic – a hundred million people were being pushed into extreme poverty each year because of health expenditures.

And let's not forget that – entering the pandemic – just one in six countries were spending the internationally accepted very basic level on healthcare.

Our economies for too long have pursued private profits before the public good – and it is the poorest people, women and girls and racially marginalized groups who suffer most – while a few at the top are able to spiral their wealth and power.

All these inequalities are being magnified during the pandemic.

Consider how people in poor countries are dying avoidable deaths right now – as a result of pharmaceutical monopolies artificially restricting vaccine supply.

Or how in Brazil for example, if you are of Afro-descent you are 40 percent more likely to die of Covid19 than White people.

Excellencies –

This Political Forum must push for action: that both meet people's needs today, and in turn reboot the SDGs.

The first is the immediate: a Covid-19 vaccine free from monopoly control – with all Covid-19 technologies transferred via the World Health Organization to ramp up supply across the world.

That is the only way out of this pandemic – and without it, inequality will continue to explode.

Second is the structural: every country needs a plan to get to publicly-delivered, publicly-funded quality, universal healthcare. There is nothing as powerful to reduce inequalities.

And its achievable: middle-income countries like Costa Rica show it can be done. Universal healthcare must be the legacy of the pandemic.

Third is the money: the introduction of permanent wealth taxes and corporation taxes the world over to both reduce inequality and to fund equalizing policies. Argentina's solidarity tax sets an example of what can be done.

And all this must be part of a plan – in every country – to reduce inequality, with specific, measurable and time-bound goals.

Thank you.