



Athens, August 2020

SYMI SYMPOSIUM DECLARATION
“ΠΑΝΔΗΜΙΑ: The World post COVID19”

COVID19 has exposed a world of inequality, division and polarization but it also opens up the possibility of a world of caring and humanity.

Equity, internationalism and humanity should be at the heart of the global pandemic response, preparedness and prevention.

The plight of the COVID-19 pandemic is particularly devastating in areas where people live in extreme poverty and in conflict zones where violence kills and displaces people, destroys infrastructure, and debilitates national and international resources.

With no clear global norms and principles, different policy choices have been taken by different countries - vastly affecting the lives and survival chances of citizens.

The multilateral system has come under attack at a time when we need the international global health system to lead.

Nation states are competing to ensure deals for PPE, medical technologies, possible therapies or future vaccines rather than cooperating in research, equitable procurement and distribution as well as on common norms.

This competitive free-for-all will only prolong and exacerbate the consequences of the crisis for us all.

Instead of working against each other in the global marketplace countries must combine forces, design a global response to save lives and prevent future pandemics.

Together we must tackle the root cause of the biggest transnational challenge of our generation, which cannot be disentangled from other existential risks such as climate change, poverty, inequality, alienation, undemocratic practices, discrimination, demagoguery, racism and violence.

COVID-19 is a shared experience.

We need to put humanity at the heart of a truly global response, defined as the actions of citizens, organisations, ministries, multilateral institutions and companies.

In order to resolve the biggest crisis of a generation:

First, we recognise that global cooperation and norms are needed to ensure people are treated fairly wherever they live in the world. Therefore, any future COVID19 vaccine should be considered a global public good. Fairness in international cooperation must respect human rights, as every human being needs to be treated equally and with the same care and respect.

Second, we need best practices to be shared. Reliable information and sharing data will allow us to learn collectively.

Third, this health crisis affects every aspect of our lives, but it impacts even more on groups that are discriminated against based on their gender, sexuality, ability, ethnicity, religion or beliefs.

Fourth, the unprecedented fragility of vulnerable groups such as refugees, internally displaced people (IDPs), prisoners, and detainees must be considered and be at the forefront of the national and international response.

Fifth, it is vital that international leaders and donors follow up the call of the Secretary General, approved by the Security Council, for a truce in conflict zones, in order to pursue a comprehensive strategic response to prevent further deterioration in the overall humanitarian and economic situation in conflict zones and low resource settings, including short, mid and longterm solutions.

Sixth, we must build resilient local communities in order to protect people and planet from pandemics, climate change, extreme poverty, discrimination and violence.

Finally, we must organise around these principles, and create a “movement of movements” for humanity. This has to include individual citizens, villages, cities, civil society, business as well as governments and international institutions.

There are no contradictory loyalties here between local, national or global levels. We are all in this together.

We all need to work together.

We call on the United Nations to draw up a global compact to express these principles so that they can underpin all pandemic prevention, preparedness and response plans for this, and future, pandemics.

We as a Symi Symposium community pledge to push these principles in the name of humanity, and in honour of Julian Perry Robinson, our friend who passed away on 22 April 2020 from COVID, who left us a roadmap for global cooperation in the form of his lifelong work to rid the world of chemical and biological weapons.