

DEMOCRACY AND PANDEMIC



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New Global Structures and Institutional Design for Future Pandemic Outbreaks

Empowering the G20's Role

The pandemic tested not just our science but our fundamental ability to cooperate across borders. The G20 can help rebuild trust and coherence in global governance, transforming crisis response into sustained resilience.

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The Pandemic as a Governance Wake-Up Call

COVID-19 exposed profound structural weaknesses in global cooperation that had been building for decades. Health, economic, and political crises collided simultaneously, yet our institutions responded in silos, unable to mount the coordinated response the moment demanded.

The pandemic revealed stark disparities: **uneven preparedness** between nations, **inequitable access** to vaccines and treatments, and **fractured trust** between governments and citizens. Multilateral governance proved reactive rather than anticipatory, always one step behind the virus.

Yet amid the chaos, moments of genuine collaboration showed what works when nations choose solidarity over sovereignty. These glimpses of cooperation must become the foundation for our future architecture.



The Institutional Gap

Our challenge is not capacity – it's coordination. The architecture for global health security exists, but the pieces don't fit together effectively.



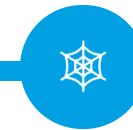
World Health Organization

Legitimate mandate and technical expertise but chronically underfunded and overstretched. Dependent on voluntary contributions that create vulnerabilities and limit strategic planning.



United Nations System

Broad legitimacy across 193 member states, but bureaucratic structures slow mobilization during crises. Universal representation sometimes impedes rapid decision-making.



G20 Forum

Agile and economically powerful, representing 85% of global GDP, but lacks institutional continuity between presidencies. No permanent secretariat to maintain momentum.

Funding mechanisms and decision-making authority remain fragmented across these institutions, creating gaps where crises slip through. We need bridges, not more buildings.

A System in Transition

The UN provides legitimacy; the G20 can provide sustained leadership. This complementary relationship is the key to effective global health governance.

Current Reality

WHO faces chronic funding uncertainty as U.S. and EU attention shifts toward domestic priorities. Voluntary contributions create unpredictable resource flows.

G20's Strategic Role

Fill the governance and financing gap through institutional leadership, not replacement. The G20 can anchor preparedness in its finance and development tracks.

Sustainable Support

Ensure predictable, multi-year support to WHO mechanisms, creating stability for long-term planning and capacity building across all regions.

Capital Alignment

Align multilateral development banks and private capital with global resilience targets, leveraging the G20's economic influence for health security.

From North–South Division to Shared Stewardship



Trust and fairness are the foundations of preparedness

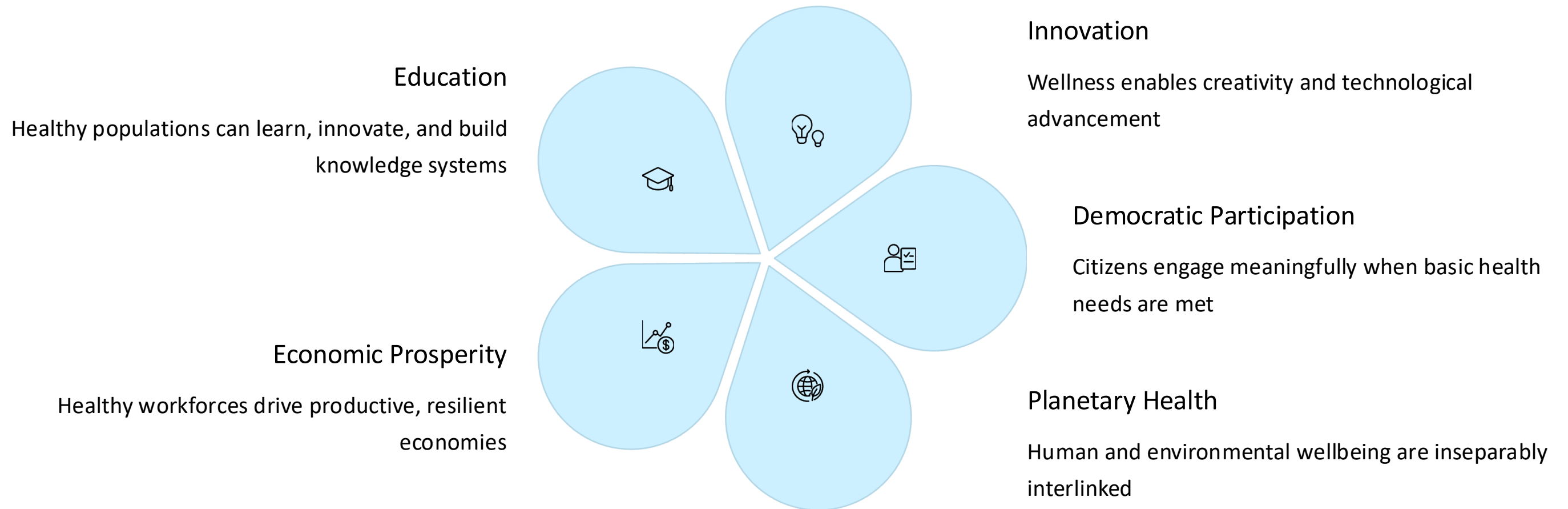
COVID-19 revealed deep asymmetries of access and agency. Vaccine nationalism and unequal distribution damaged the fabric of international cooperation, leaving scars that persist today.

Future preparedness requires a fundamentally different approach: **shared stewardship** built on co-design, co-financing, and co-benefit. This means including regional bodies like Africa CDC, ASEAN, and Mercosur as equal partners in governance structures from the beginning.

Trust-building must be recognized as core to democratic resilience. Without trust between nations and between governments and citizens, no technical solution will succeed. The legitimacy of our institutions depends on their inclusivity and fairness.

Health as the Foundation of Human and Planetary Flourishing

Health is not merely the absence of disease – it's the entry point for broader societal resilience and the foundation upon which all human progress rests.



We must treat health as a **global public good** and integrate health considerations into economic and environmental governance at every level.

The Promise of Digital Infrastructure and AI

Digital cooperation is the new backbone of pandemic preparedness. Data and artificial intelligence can accelerate both disease detection and equitable response – but only if we build the right governance frameworks.



Interoperability & Privacy

Systems designed for seamless data exchange while protecting individual rights through privacy-by-design principles



Accountable AI

Open data frameworks with transparent algorithms and human oversight to prevent bias and ensure ethical deployment



Citizen-Centric Trust

Digital trust models that put people at the center, ensuring technology serves public health rather than surveillance

📄 **GSI's Digital Infrastructure & Data Agency project** provides a comprehensive blueprint for a Global Health Data Compact, demonstrating how international cooperation on digital infrastructure can be both effective and respectful of sovereignty.

GSI's Contribution: Infrastructure for Cooperation

Building bridges between science, policy, and practice



The Global Solutions Initiative connects think tanks, governments, and innovators through strategic engagement with the G7, G20, and UN system. We translate cross-sector dialogue into actionable institutional design proposals.

GSI serves as institutional connective tissue, ensuring that policy innovations don't remain theoretical but translate into concrete governance reforms.

Health-Related Workstreams

01

T20 South Africa 2025

Leading policy recommendations on financing and governance of health resilience for the G20 agenda

02

Asia & Africa Dialogues

Facilitating South-South cooperation on health innovation, equity, and technology transfer

03

Strategic Partnerships

Collaborating with WHO, G20 Health & Development Partnership, World Health Summit, Gates Foundation, Gavi – The Vaccine Alliance and other institutions to align research with policy

04

Knowledge Networks

Reaching over 25,000 global policy experts to generate understanding and impact of evidence-based solutions.



Funding: From Ad-hoc Aid to Sustainable Resilience

We must build a predictable financial architecture for preparedness that transcends election cycles and economic downturns.



Global Resilience Financing Framework

Establish a coordinated financing mechanism under G20 oversight, providing strategic direction and accountability for pandemic preparedness investments.



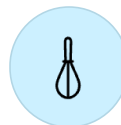
Link to WHO Pandemic Agreement

Align financing mechanisms with the WHO Pandemic Agreement and establish measurable outcomes for transparency and effectiveness.



Diversified Resource Pool

Combine public budgets for legitimacy, philanthropic and private capital for innovation, and multilateral development bank resources for scale and reach.



Incentivize Long-Term Investment

Create financial instruments that reward sustained commitments over short-term pledges, building genuine resilience rather than crisis response capacity.

Designing for the Next Crisis

The next outbreak will test solidarity before science

"Venice invented quarantine to save lives. We must now invent cooperation to save trust."

Institutional courage is the defining requirement of our time. We must move beyond emergency response to permanent structures that embed preparedness into the DNA of global governance.

Permanent Ecosystem

Empower the G20–UN–WHO ecosystem as a standing architecture, not an ad-hoc crisis team

Interconnected Resilience

Treat health, digital, and climate resilience as interconnected global public goods requiring integrated governance

GSI's Commitment

Advancing governance innovation for a fairer, more prepared world through evidence-based policy and inclusive dialogue

The infrastructure we build today will determine whether the next pandemic brings out humanity's best or worst instincts. Let us choose wisely, act boldly, and cooperate courageously.





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