

## **IDSA Statement on 148<sup>th</sup> WHO Executive Board**

### **Agenda Item 14.1: COVID-19 Response**

The Global Health Council and its partner the Infectious Diseases Society of America commend WHO on its efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, including providing member states with scientific and technical guidance, facilitating surveillance and data sharing, supporting research and development of new tools and helping to procure personal protective equipment, diagnostics, medications and other medical supplies. The pandemic has highlighted the need to strengthen global capacities to detect, prevent and respond to infectious disease threats while protecting hard-won gains against long-standing epidemics of other infectious diseases. As infectious diseases professionals, we call on member states to increase resources and strengthen multilateral and international cooperation to accelerate efforts against COVID-19 in the most vulnerable countries.

We commend WHO, CEPI, GAVI and other partners in the COVAX Facility for securing access to nearly 2 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccine for the most vulnerable countries. However, countries need stronger infrastructure to effectively deliver and administer vaccines. We urge member states to invest in vaccine infrastructure and communications tools to boost vaccine confidence and to sustain these investments beyond the pandemic to reduce the burden of vaccine preventable diseases and better prepare for future health threats.

The pandemic is eroding gains made in the fight against HIV, TB and malaria, and increased resources are needed to regain ground. Since the pandemic began, new HIV treatment initiation has dropped sharply while TB services have been disrupted in over 78 percent of countries. Disruptions to essential malaria services could result in a doubling of mortality, while an additional 400,000 people could die from TB alone. The pandemic has disrupted immunization services, including halting 30 measles programs. If immediate actions are not taken to address COVID-19's impacts on these health threats, we will see a reversal of progress for years to come.