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Power of Empathy

As the novel coronavirus is ravaging the world, nations have rushed to impose quarantines and develop vaccines, among other prevention and treatment measures, hoping to stall the runaway epidemic and better treat critically ill patients. However, such actions alone are not enough to secure a resounding victory in this global war.

In the grip of the pandemic, the public health sector bears the brunt. Faster modern transportation in a more connected and globalized world has accelerated the spread of the virus. The number of confirmed cases has soared worldwide. The strain of medical resources in some countries may deny patients proper treatment. Worse if the virus mutates vaccines being developed at the moment will not be effective.

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* <https://global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202003/23/WS5e780335a310128217281171.html>。



The ongoing pandemic has grounded the global economy to a halt, which had already been on a downward spiral. It has disrupted global manufacturing and supply chains and rocked the global capital market. A recent report issued by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development warned that the outbreak of the novel coronavirus means global economic growth will be its lowest since 2009.

The political fallout of this contagion is also palpable. Some nations have intentionally ignored what China has done to curb the epidemic, using this coronavirus public health crisis as a political prop. And Western media have been biased in their reporting. The New York Times for instance adopted a double-standard when commenting on similar quarantine measures in China and Italy, revealing its arrogance and prejudice against China. It accused China's lockdown of Wuhan as coming "at great cost to people's livelihoods and personal liberties", but praised Italy's lockdown of several cities, as "risking its economy in an effort to contain Europe's worst coronavirus outbreak".

Beyond improving medical treatment and making scientific breakthroughs, the international community should hammer out solutions and share successful experiences in fighting the virus. A broad consensus to seek cooperation is the ultimate answer to end this pandemic.

A community with a shared future for humanity, proposed by China, is conducive to global joint control and prevention, and also to stronger global public health governance.

It advocates mutual respect and consultation, avoids politicizing the pandemic and calls for cooperation. First, mutual trust, experience-sharing and policy-communication should serve as the cornerstones for a global mechanism to contain the spread of the virus. Seeking common ground, building consensus and



agreeing to disagree are paramount, as nations faced with varying levels of menace at home may adopt different approaches as they see fit to tackle the epidemic. International platforms such as the World Health Organization and G20 can enhance synergy between major economies by sharing information on data and vaccine development.

Not a single nation will be immune to a global recession, as national economies are closely intertwined. Accelerating negotiations on the China-Japan-Republic of Korea Free Trade Area would help promote regional stability and economic growth.

The key target of building a global joint control and prevention mechanism is to stop the spread of the virus and maintain economic growth at the same time. Governments should avoid extreme measures to limit the cross-border movement of people. On the other hand, they should abandon protectionism. Low or even zero tariffs will keep international trade and logistics unimpeded, which will help ensure the supply of daily necessities and medical supplies.

Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi, after a phone call with his Italian counterpart Luigi Di Maio, arranged for medical supplies and a team of Chinese experts to assist Italy. All countries should discard any "beggar-thy-neighbor" policies and work together for shared, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security. Since the onset of the epidemic, international cooperation and mutual assistance have abounded, proving the power of empathy and providing hope for humanity.

Building a global mechanism of joint control and prevention should not be a Band-Aid, but a long-term solution that addresses the root causes of global health emergencies. A green global ecosystem, which is an integral part of the mechanism, expects all nations to respect and protect nature. Stronger awareness, tougher



legislature and swifter actions will increase global health governance and protect the global ecological system in the long run.

A community with a shared future for humanity expresses a deep concern for the world and highlights the shared responsibility of nations to cooperate. Establishing such a community would not only help in the fight against the virus, but also promote the setting up of a global mechanism for joint control and prevention for improved global health governance.

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