

## Foreword

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In Mexico, there are sanitary regulatory processes that seek to prevent risks or harm to the health of the population, as well as to promote positive individual and collective health practices. The Federal Commission for Protection against Sanitary Risks (COFEPRIS) has the mission to protect the population against health risks arising from the use and consumption of goods and services, health inputs, and from exposure to various environmental and occupational factors, from health emergencies, and from the provision of health services, through the regulation, control and prevention of sanitary risks.

This institution seeks to position itself as a national authority for protection against sanitary risks in a reliable and effective manner. One of the mechanisms by which it achieves this objective is the implementation of policies, programs and projects in the area at the level of international best practice, in coordination with public, private and social actors.

The covid-19 pandemic made more evident than ever the existing gaps in access to health care within and between our countries, which are further exacerbated by differences in regulatory systems, among other reasons. By the end of August 2021, Latin America and the Caribbean accounted for 32% of deaths, despite representing 8.4% of the world's population. In this regard, the pressing need to strengthen regional collaboration and solidarity to ensure better access to medicines and health services in general became evident.

In this light, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SRE), in collaboration with COFEPRIS, has promoted sanitary self-sufficiency in the region, recognizing that diseases and health vulnerabilities do not respect borders. As a result, the e Plan for Self-Sufficiency in Health Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (PAS) was created during Mexico's Pro Tempore Presidency of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). The PAS outlines the objectives and actions needed to achieve regional and sub-regional integration to ensure greater productive autonomy and universal access to vaccines and medicines. It is therefore necessary to continue strengthening intersectoral collaboration in different areas to guarantee the accessibility, quality and safety of medicines and optimize production chains, benefiting a population of more than 660 million people.

Furthermore, in June 2022, authorities from Mexico, Colombia, Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Cuba came together at the Bogota Meeting, where their representatives discussed the challenges that must be overcome to achieve regulatory convergence in the region, as well as the need to implement strategies that guarantee access to medicines and medical devices and promote regional integration and cooperation. In the document that emerged from this meeting, it was agreed to create a Regional School for Sanitary Regulation, as well as to establish working groups to identify priorities and share the reflections of the dialogue held during the meeting of national regulatory authorities in Washington D.C. in July 2023.

In this regard, regional organizations and mechanisms have taken actions aimed at health management and self-sufficiency, generating a dialogue with the productive, academic and scientific sectors, in order to contribute to the protection of human rights in the health context and guarantee access to safe, effective and quality medicines.

At the global level, the World Health Organization's central aim is to ensure health security. The Covid-19 pandemic in recent years was a major obstacle to achieving this goal. However, today there is the WHO Strategy (2022-2026) for the National Action Plan for Health Security, which represents WHO's framework of support to its Member States to create and maintain effective and functional systems capable of preventing, identifying, protecting against, controlling and resolving public health emergencies, all in line with the International Health Regulations.

In order to properly understand the importance and impact of sanitary regulation, it is necessary to study the different efforts that have been carried out in different latitudes, as well as multilateral cooperation in this area. This is how the idea for this issue of the *Revista Mexicana de Política Exterior* came about, which is the result of a fruitful collaboration between COFEPRIS and the SRE, through the Matías Romero Insitute. Its objective is to raise awareness of the issues of sanitary regulation in Mexico and Latin America in order to build relationships, extend national interest in public health, foster regional cooperation and promote science and innovation between countries, from a humanistic perspective.

We hope that this issue of the *Revista Mexicana de Política Exterior* will contribute to fostering reflection on how regulation strengthens and prepares health systems for sanitary emergencies, increasing well-being and protecting populations in our country and around the world.