PHM Call to Action in all country circles

**Support the #TRIPSwaiver campaign to end “vaccine apartheid”**

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Public funding has paved the way for scientific developments to beat the coronavirus – but now corporate property rights are threatening access to vital medicines and equipment, putting the lives of millions at risk. That's why many governments around the world – supported by unions and civil society – are calling for the World Trade Organization (WTO) to waive intellectual property protection measures for COVID-19 vaccines, diagnostics, medicines and medical supplies.

Most Northern Countries are still denying that the TRIPS Waiver proposed by India and South Africa is a necessary approach to achieve global equity in accessing COVID-19 vaccines medicine and medical supplies and therefore block the TRIPS waiver proposal.

This TRIPS waiver was going to be discussed next week during the upcoming meeting of Trade Ministers at the WTO. Due to the emergence of a new COVID-19 variant, the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference has now been postponed indefinitely. However, the TRIPS waiver request can still be decided in a General Council meeting. Vaccine apartheid politics of wealthy Northern counties have prevented the development of a negotiating text without which no decision can be made at this ministerial meeting.

We must continue to urge the EU (lead by Germany), UK, and Switzerland to cease filibustering the talks. With our support and pressure, we can make it happen. The momentum for pressuring these countries must continue until everyone, everywhere has access to lifesaving treatments and vaccines. Nobody is safe until all are safe!

**JOIN THE GLOBAL CALL TO ACTION ON 30 NOVEMBER 202**

**HOW?**

**PROTEST ACTION**

Deliver the draft letter below to the local consulate or embassy in your country of those governments that are not supporting the TRIPS waiver (Germany, Austria, Netherlands, France, Belgium and Denmark, UK, Norway, Switzerland) and take a photo of this action (in front of the consulate/embassy building).

*On 30 November*, post your picture on social media with your message along the hashtag **#TRIPSWaiver**. Tag @PHMglobal

**ONLINE ACTION**

On 30th of November email the letter to the these governments to let them know that private profits must not be put ahead of public health: Germany, Austria, Netherlands, France, Belgium and Denmark, UK, Norway, Switzerland. You should be able to find the email address for your local consular office online.

AND

Join the Twitter storm on the 30th of November – more info here: [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1MuBqke8TAA6JXbxCIHlwGl8RK8JAmoqY4LyIUPNHrmY/edit#](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1MuBqke8TAA6JXbxCIHlwGl8RK8JAmoqY4LyIUPNHrmY/edit)

**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE TRIPS WAIVER**

* Watch: short video on [Monopoly patents or vaccines for all?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKaqZHaNzKM&t=1s) or a short video on [Equity and why we need the TRIPS waiver](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I15EJ7ydl9I)
* Read: [3 reasons why to support the TRIPS waiver](https://msfaccess.org/3-reasons-why-we-need-waiver-monopolies-all-covid-19-medical-tools)

**CONTACT:**

For more information and to get your country circle involved please contact:

* Lauren (PHM South Africa) at lparemoer@gmail.com

**MODEL LETTER (to be used for email or in-person delivery):**

\_\_\_\_ November 2021

ADD details of the person and embassy you send this to. We suggest sending the letter to the following countries: Germany, Austria, Netherlands, France, Belgium and Denmark, UK, Norway, Switzerland

Fulfilling the commitment: COVID-19 IP waiver for all medical tools

Your Excellency,

We write to you as affected community members working on social justice in [ADD YOUR COUNTRY] to request that the government of  [INSERT COUNTRY BLOCKING WAIVER] immediately starts supporting  the temporary waiver under the World Trade Organization’s (WTO) Agreement on Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) to enable its rapid adoption at the 12th Ministerial Conference of the WTO.1

We continue to experience the unacceptable inequity of access to COVID-19 vaccines, treatments, diagnostics and other lifesaving medical tools and note similar challenges reported by communities in other low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Every day we are witness to the tremendous suffering the virus is causing; people taking their last breaths and families being ripped apart. Our health workers are also dying.

Vaccine nationalism and hoarding by high-income countries (HICs) have jeopardised global solidarity and deepened inequity. While European countries have enough vaccines for more than their entire population, 9 in 10 people in the poorest countries will miss out on a vaccine this year. Limited voluntary actions of pharmaceutical companies continue to exclude millions of people from securing reliable access to lifesaving medical tools. The temporary global mechanism for access to COVID-19 medical tools, namely the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A), has failed to ensure equitable access and falls short of good governance, transparency and accountability in its operation.

South Africa has established the first mRNA vaccine technology transfer hub in collaboration with WHO to facilitate wider production and supply of COVID-19 mRNA vaccines by and for LMICs.4 Unfortunately, none of the major mRNA vaccine developers have joined this initiative, and patents on mRNA vaccines secured by these developers are hindering local production.

Our right to produce and supply these urgently needed medical tools is denied. This is injustice. We demand change, not charity. We call on the [ADD NAME OF BLOCKING COUNTRY] government to join waiver-supporting countries to make the TRIPS waiver a reality, enabling greater self-reliance for [add your own country] and other LMICs.

We are deeply concerned by [ADD NAME OF BLOCKING COUNTRY] government’s approach to the TRIPS waiver negotiation to date. Instead of standing in true solidarity (not charity) and recognizing the evident and pressing needs to support countries to acquire additional policy options to address access challenges, [ADD NAME OF BLOCKING COUNTRY]  has chosen to oppose the waiver proposal which could have leveraged broader possibility for diversifying production and supply by and for LMICs. [ADD NAME OF BLOCKING COUNTRY]  is allowing the vaccine knowledge to be hoarded by just a handful of pharmaceutical companies, who get to decide who lives and who dies.

The waiver negotiation has been delayed for over a year while the pandemic continues to affect millions of people, with more concerning variants of the virus putting even greater strain on already overburdened public health systems. The world is watching now as the WTO Ministerial Conference is upon us. The waiver should be adopted with coverage for all lifesaving medical tools, not only vaccines, and with a duration that is sufficient to enable more production and supply to improve the pandemic response. [ADD NAME OF BLOCKING COUNTRY] has an undeniable responsibility to act in true solidarity and stop blocking other countries’ proposal which could save more lives.

We sincerely request that the [ADD NAME OF BLOCKING COUNTRY]  government starts supporting the TRIPS waiver. Every day of delay is prolonging our suffering.

Sincerely,