

COVAX Civil Society Representatives - Statement on the launch of the COVAX Investment Opportunity (April 2021)

Universal and **equitable** access to vaccines to combat COVID-19 is a matter of **human rights**, **public health** and **economics**. Health, and by extension access to the commodities to achieve and maintain it, is a human right and vaccines should therefore be 'Global Public Goods'. With nearly three million deaths globally; struggling economies and loss of livelihoods; health systems on the brink of collapse, this once in a lifetime event requires a once in a lifetime solution.

It is imperative that the COVAX facility is adequately resourced to achieve its ambitions. At 38.7 million vaccines delivered to 107 participants so far, we can begin to aim that vulnerable front health workers are protected globally- but this is only a drop in the ocean of what's needed. The success of multilateralism is a product of the individual behaviours of countries and vaccine nationalism will only prolong this pandemic and lead to avoidable deaths and human suffering. The cost of vaccine nationalism to the global economy potentially stands at US \$9.2 trillion. We also have to acknowledge that a business as usual approach will not secure anywhere near enough the sheer volumes of vaccine doses we need to achieve universal coverage with safe and effective vaccines. If this virus is circulating in any corner of the globe, the emergence of new strains can render any vaccination efforts futile. As such, **solidarity is self interest**. **Only** by ensuring that others are safe, can we ensure our own safety.

As the COVAX investment opportunity is launched, it is critical that:

- We have a fully funded COVAX to ensure fair and equitable distribution to lifesaving COVID-19 vaccines globally, including for the AMC, delivery costs and demand generation activities.
- Governments ensure that they do not engage in behaviours that will undermine this monumental initiative such as overordering vaccines above their population needs as well as imposing export controls on vaccines and other commodities that will ultimately disrupt global vaccine supply chains.
- COVAX continues to ensure meaningful engagement of civil society and communities, including an open and inclusive consultation on the design of the COVAX manufacturing taskforce.
- The global community ensures that we use all the tools at our disposal to expand supply with public health orientated management of intellectual property. This includes using flexible intellectual property management, including intellectual property waivers, non-exclusive licensing, technology and know-how transfers with manufacturers in low- and middle-income countries, and supporting mechanisms like C-TAP.
- In addition, governments must ensure they have, and are able to use, legal instruments to ensure intellectual property does not impede access to vaccines, including not undermining countries' rights to utilise flexibilities highlighted in the Doha Declaration on TRIPS and Public Health.