

To: Permanent Missions in Geneva and to the
United Nations Secretary General Office

From: Civil Society Organisations

Date: 8 February 2021

Open Letter to States on Universal Access to COVID-19 Vaccines

In these early months of 2021, our common SDG pledge to leaving no-one behind is as critical as ever. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to hit indiscriminately both high- and low-income countries, threatening lives and aggravating existing inequalities and vulnerabilities, it is high time for international solidarity.

We are conveners of influential civil society networks and platforms. Our constituency entails thousands of civil society organisations and their partners which work with, and on behalf of millions of people who are being marginalised and deprived of their human and civic rights.

We highly value the long-standing partnership with States and UN agencies. We are determined to mobilise and lead collectively, based on a spirit of strengthened global solidarity, focused in particular on the rights of those left furthest behind.

Together we have been able to move forward on crucial agendas such as peace and human rights, disaster response and development goals. Although, across these topics, serious challenges still exist, we remain committed to addressing them jointly. This is key to our success.

Regretfully, today we note a lack of collective actions in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and are seriously concerned by the increased competition on access to vaccines. While we recognise States' responsibility to respect, protect and promote the right to adequate health care for all those living on their territory, we would like to highlight that this pandemic knows no borders and demands global solutions. With new variants of the virus developing in various locations in the globe, it has become clear that universal access to the COVID-19 vaccine is the only solution to end the pandemic and mitigate the deepening socio-economic inequalities. All people worldwide, without distinction of any kind, must have access to an effective vaccine in a timely manner.

Thereby we call upon States to step up multilateral efforts and lead a truthful global response. We call for a global allocation framework that puts humanity at the center. It is in our common interest to ensure that priority in access to vaccine at a global level is given to those at a higher risk of infection and/or developing serious disease. Other priority considerations at national and global level will be counterproductive, leading to a perpetual spiral of new, vaccine-resistant variants of the virus.

We urge States, pharmaceutical companies and all other private actors in the supply and production chain to undertake concrete steps to rapidly step up the production of vaccines' and at a price that will be affordable for all. In these life-threatening times, more than ever, we need full transparency from our governments and accountability on invested public money.

As civil society organisations we stand ready to work hand in hand with States, UN Agencies and the private sector to ensure that this truly becomes a people's vaccines. We have valuable knowledge, expertise and capacities to concretely support the roll out of effective and all-inclusive national vaccines programs. We strongly believe that only by working together we can defeat this pandemic and successfully stand against future ones.

Signed,

Ignacio Packer
Executive Director, [ICVA](#)



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