

We must guarantee the equitable rollout of COVID-19 Vaccines

CSO Call to Action

As the world continues to face the growing COVID-19 pandemic, 2021 brings hope that the end of the pandemic is in sight with the roll out of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines. We must ensure this is equitable.

Civil society organisations have been a critical partner in the COVID-19 response. We continue to work with global stakeholders through the ACT Accelerator and the COVAX Facility, towards the goal of ensuring that all people everywhere can access a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine. However, despite the hope that 2021 brings, several challenges stand in the way of that goal becoming a reality, and the protection of many hangs in the balance. Issues of sufficient supply, fair and equitable global access, efficient delivery systems and ensuring vaccine doses for populations in humanitarian and emergency settings continue to pose challenges. The challenges we face in 2021 are no smaller than those we faced in 2020.

No one is safe until we are all protected. As the WHO Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, stressed on the 18th of January 2021, “The world is on the brink of a catastrophic moral failure and the price of this failure will be paid with lives and livelihoods in the world’s poorest countries.” While several high-income countries have begun to vaccinate their populations – already rolling out millions of doses – many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa will not access enough doses to vaccinate more than 20% of their population until 2022. This is a gross injustice and will only prolong the pandemic. All countries, irrespective of wealth, must have unhindered, timely access to quality, safe, efficacious and affordable vaccines, in accordance with the [73rd World Health Assembly resolution on the COVID-19 response](#) and [UN General Assembly Resolutions A/RES/74/307, A/74/L.56/.](#)

Call to Action

We, civil society organisations from across the globe, call on governments, donors, pharmaceutical companies and multilateral agencies to **take bold and urgent action to address the challenges of COVID-19 vaccine access, guaranteeing the equitable rollout of vaccines to all populations based on need.**

ENSURE GLOBAL EQUITABLE ACCESS TO VACCINES

- 1. We call on donors to ensure the full funding of the ACT Accelerator, and to ensure the urgent mobilisation of the remaining US\$2 billion needed in 2021 for the COVAX Facility AMC.** Without full resources within the first half of 2021 it will be impossible for the COVAX Facility to secure deals with suppliers to ensure that low and lower-middle income countries are able to access enough donor-financed vaccine doses in 2021 to cover 20% of their populations.
- 2. We call on governments to not undermine global efforts to secure equitable allocations of vaccines for all countries.** Governments must not engage in vaccine nationalism, including using their purchasing power to buy up limited supply of vaccines (in some cases even beyond quantities needed to cover their population), at the expense of others. Governments should support the COVAX Facility

and follow the WHO/COVAX allocation framework (20%), which aims to guide global allocation decisions. Countries should urgently re-distribute a proportion of doses secured through bilateral deals with the COVAX Facility, and especially any surplus doses.

3. to guarantee that safe and effective vaccines are available and rolled out to protect people living in emergency and humanitarian situations.

INCREASE SUPPLY AND AVAILABILITY OF VACCINES

4. **We call on vaccine manufacturers to submit COVID-19 vaccine regulatory data to the WHO as soon as it is available**, and at the same time it is made available to national regulatory authorities, to speed up the process of having vaccines approved for inclusion in the COVAX portfolio and approved for country rollout.
5. **We urge research centers, pharmaceutical companies and governments to support the sharing of data and knowledge; technology transfer; and investment to scale up supply:**
 - **Share COVID-19 vaccine technology, related knowledge, intellectual property and data through C-TAP. Pharmaceutical companies must first and foremost act on this.** Governments and multilateral organisations, like WHO and Gavi, must also play a role pushing for action on this.
 - **Promote technology transfers to diversify and expand the production base increase supply.** All stakeholders should encourage voluntary technology transfer and licensing of intellectual property and patent pooling, including through the Medicines Patent Pool and C-TAP.
 - **Ensure full transparency around clinical trial data, cost of R&D and price.** The sharing of data is critical to advance discovery and accelerate delivery of innovations. Especially data from publicly-funded research should be made public, openly accessible without delay and following the where possible.
 - **Invest in LMICs to build regional research capacity for vaccine development and local production to accelerate innovations and expand scale up.** Support industry collaboration and prioritize investment in manufacturing capacity, prioritizing investment and collaboration with developing country vaccine manufacturers. Identify and support the implementation of a range of options, including the provisions of the TRIPS Agreement, to be used in scaling up the development, manufacturing and distribution capacities.
6. **We call on governments to fully leverage private and public investments** in ongoing coordination, and in collaboration with COVAX. Such collaboration should drive increased transparency in investments and costs along the research, development and production chain to come-up with fair pricing, public ownership of publicly funded products and enable licensing agreements for rapid and broad distribution of resulting products and services under free or affordable terms.

ENSURE COUNTRY READINESS FOR VACCINE ROLLOUT

7. **We call upon governments, donors and multilateral agencies to strengthen public health system capacity and supply chains for the delivery of COVID-19 vaccines.** COVID-19 vaccines can only be universally accessible if countries' health systems are able to deliver them to their populations and integrate them in their national health systems.
8. We call upon national governments and donors to ensure **adequate resources are made available urgently to support the scale up of delivery systems** for a COVID-19 vaccine, while ensuring funding is not diverted from other essential routine services and that it does not increase a country's debt.

National governments must also ensure that routine services are not disrupted by the roll out of Covid-19 vaccines.

9. **We call on national governments and other stakeholders to ensure meaningful civil society participation** in the national COVID-19 vaccine Task Force and all decision-making around country readiness and vaccine rollout. Civil society organizations garner trust with communities who may be reticent to accept COVID-19 vaccinations and will help ensure accurate information prevails over misinformation on vaccinations. Civil society organizations are also familiar with and operate in vulnerable communities who may be overlooked or forgotten as part of national vaccination rollouts, and thus will help ensure these communities are included in vaccination plans.
10. **We call on national governments to follow [WHO SAGE](#) guidance** when making national vaccine allocation decisions to ensure they are rolled out where needed first.

To support the global equitable rollout and uptake of COVID-19 vaccines, civil society is collectively:

- Supporting the COVAX Facility to mobilise the remaining \$2bn needed in 2021 to support vaccine access in low and middle-income countries, as part of wider support to meet the funding needs for the ACT Accelerator.
- Working with communities to ensure strong demand for, and acceptance of, COVID-19 vaccines, including countering anti-vaccine stories and beliefs.
- Supporting governments to ensure country preparedness for the rollout of vaccines, as well as in national decision-making on vaccine allocation prioritisation.
- Advocating for governments not to engage in vaccine nationalism that could undermine the global equitable distribution of vaccines, as well as for action to address challenges to global vaccine supply.
- Engaging with diverse stakeholders globally, including communities in low and middle-income countries, to ensure all voices are heard in governance and decision-making structures. We will also exercise standards of full transparency and stakeholder consensus in all interactions.
- Working with national partners, as well as Gavi, WHO and UNICEF, to ensure that routine immunization continues to be prioritised, and that investment to support COVID-19 vaccination helps to strengthen delivery and sustainability of other routine immunisations and health services, as part of a strong primary healthcare system.

