

Thursday, 14 May 2020

Uniting Behind A People's Vaccine Against COVID-19

Humanity today, in all its fragility, is searching for an effective and safe vaccine against COVID-19. It is our best hope of putting a stop to this painful global pandemic.

We are calling on Health Ministers at the World Health Assembly to rally behind a people's vaccine against this disease urgently. Governments and international partners must unite around a global guarantee which ensures that, when a safe and effective vaccine is developed, it is produced rapidly at scale and made available for all people, in all countries, free of charge. The same applies for all treatments, diagnostics, and other technologies for COVID-19.

We recognize that many countries and international organizations are making progress towards this goal, cooperating multilaterally on research and development, funding and access, including the welcome \$8 billion pledged on 4th May. Thanks to tireless public and private sector efforts and billions of dollars of publicly-financed research, many vaccine candidates are proceeding with unprecedented speed and several have begun clinical trials.

Our world will only be safer once everyone can benefit from the science and access a vaccine - and that is a political challenge. The World Health Assembly must forge a global agreement that ensures rapid universal access to quality-assured vaccines and treatments with need prioritized above the ability to pay.

It is time for Health Ministers to renew the commitments made at the founding of the World Health Organization, where all states agreed to deliver the "the highest attainable standard of health as a fundamental right of every human being".

Now is *not* the time to allow the interests of the wealthiest corporations and governments to be placed before the universal need to save lives, or to leave this massive and moral task to market forces. Access to vaccines and treatments as global public goods are in the interests of all humanity. We cannot afford for monopolies, crude competition and near-sighted nationalism to stand in the way.

We must heed the warning that "Those who do not remember the past are doomed to repeat it." We must learn the painful lessons from a history of unequal access in dealing with disease such as HIV and Ebola. But we must also remember the groundbreaking victories of health movements, including AIDS activists and advocates who fought for access to affordable medicines for all.

Applying *both* sets of lessons, we call for a global agreement on COVID-19 vaccines, diagnostics and treatments – implemented under the leadership of the World Health Organization – that:

1. Ensures mandatory worldwide sharing of all COVID-19 related knowledge, data and technologies with a pool of COVID-19 licenses freely available to all

countries. Countries should be empowered and enabled to make full use of agreed safeguards and flexibilities in the WTO Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health to protect access to medicines for all.

2. Establishes a global and equitable rapid manufacturing and distribution plan – that is fully-funded by rich nations – for the vaccine and all COVID-19 products and technologies that guarantees transparent ‘at true cost-prices’ and supplies according to need. Action must start urgently to massively build capacity worldwide to manufacture billions of vaccine doses and to recruit and train the millions of paid and protected health workers needed to deliver them.
3. Guarantees COVID-19 vaccines, diagnostics, tests and treatments are provided free of charge to everyone, everywhere. Access needs to be prioritized first for front-line workers, the most vulnerable people, and for poor countries with the least capacity to save lives.

In doing so, no one can be left behind. Transparent democratic governance must be set in place by the WHO, inclusive of independent expertise and civil society partners, which is essential to lock-in accountability for this agreement.

In doing so, we also recognize the urgent need to reform and strengthen public health systems worldwide, removing all barriers so that rich and poor alike can access the health care, technologies and medicines they need, free at the point of need.

Only a people’s vaccine – with equality and solidarity at its core – can protect all of humanity and get our societies safely running again. A bold international agreement cannot wait.

Signed,

Imran Khan - Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Cyril Ramaphosa - President of the Republic of South Africa and Chairperson of the African Union

Karen Koning Abuzayd - Commissioner of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry for Syria, Under Secretary-General as UNRWA Commissioner-General (2005-2010)

Maria Elena Agüero - Secretary General, World Leadership Alliance-Club de Madrid

Esko Aho - Prime Minister of Finland (1991-1995)¹

Dr. Shamshad Akhtar - Former UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Rashid Alimov - Secretary General, Shanghai Cooperation Organization (2016-2019), Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan (1992-1994)²

Philip Alston - John Norton Pomeroy Professor of Law, New York University School of Law and Former UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights

Baroness Valerie Amos - United Nations Undersecretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator (2010-2015)

Rosalía Arteaga Serrano - President of Ecuador (1997)²

Maria Eugenia Brizuela de Avila - Minister of Foreign Affairs of Salvador (1999-2004)

Shaukat Aziz - Prime Minister of Pakistan (2004-2007), former VP of the Citibank²

Jan Peter Balkenende - Prime Minister of The Netherlands (2002-2010)¹

Joyce Banda - President of the Republic of Malawi (2012-2014) and Champion for an AIDS- Free Generation¹

Nelson Barbosa - Professor, FGV and the University of Brasilia, and former Finance Minister of Brazil

José Manuel Barroso - Prime Minister of Portugal (2002-2004), President of the European Commission (2004-2014)¹

Carol Bellamy - Former Executive Director, UNICEF (1995-2005)

Valdis Birkavs - Prime Minister of Latvia (1993-1994)¹

Irina Bokova - Director-General of UNESCO (2009-2017)

Gordon Brown - Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (2007-2010)

Winnie Byanyima - Executive Director of UNAIDS and UN Under-Secretary General

Kim Campbell - Prime Minister of Canada (1993)¹

Fernando Henrique Cardoso - President of Brazil (1995-2003)¹

Gina Casar - Executive Director of AMEXCID, Associate Administrator of UNDP (2014-2015)

Hikmet Cetin - Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey (1991-1994), former Speaker of the Parliament²

Ha-Joon Chang - Director, Centre of Development Studies, University of Cambridge

Judy Cheng-Hopkins - Former Assistant Secretary-General, Peacebuilding Support, United Nations

Laura Chinchilla - President of Costa Rica (2010-2014)¹

Joaquim Chissano - President of the Republic of Mozambique (1986-2005) and Champion for an AIDS- Free Generation¹

Helen Clark - Prime Minister of New Zealand (1999-2008), UNDP Administrator (2009-2017)^{1 2}

Emil Constantinescu - President of Romania (1996-2000)²

Paula A. Cox - Premier of Bermuda (2010-2012)

Herman De Croo - Minister of State of Belgium; Honorary Speaker of the House²

Olivier De Schutter - Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights

Danny Dorling - Professor of Human Geography at Oxford University

Ruth Dreifuss - President of Switzerland (1999) and Federal Councillor (1993-2002)

Diane Elson - Emeritus Professor University of Essex, Member of UN Committee for Development Policy

Maria Fernanda Espinosa - President of the United Nations General Assembly (2018-2019), Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ecuador (2007-2009, 2017-2018) and Member of the Political Advisory Panel of UHC2030

Moussa Faki - Chairperson of the African Union Commission

Christiana Figueres - Executive Secretary of UNFCCC (2010-2016)

Vigdís Finnbogadóttir - President of Iceland (1980-1996)¹

Louise Fréchette - UN Deputy Secretary-General (1998-2006)

Sakiko Fukuda-Parr - Director of the Julien J. Studley Graduate Programs in International Affairs and Professor of International Affairs at The New School

Patrick Gaspard - Former United States Ambassador to South Africa, President of the Open Society Foundations

Jayati Ghosh - Professor of Economics at Jawaharlal Nehru University

Felipe González - President of the Government of Spain (1982-1996)¹

Rebeca Grynspan - Vice President of Costa Rica (1994-1998), Ibero-American Secretary General

Alfred Gusenbauer - Chancellor of Austria (2007-2008)¹

Han Seung-Soo - Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea (2008-2009)¹

Noeleen Heyzer - Member of the UN Secretary-General's High Level Advisory Board on Medication²

Mladen Ivanic - President of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2014-2018)²

Devaki Jain - Feminist economist, Honorary Fellow at St Anne's College, Oxford and member of the erstwhile South Commission (1987-90)

Arjun Jayadev - Professor of Economics at Azim Premji University

Rob Johnson - President of the Institute for New Economic Thinking

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf - President of the Republic of Liberia (2006-2018)¹

Mehdi Jomaa - Prime Minister of Tunisia (2014-2015)¹

Anthony T. Jones - Vice-President and Executive Director of Gorbachev Foundation of North America (GFNA)¹

Ivo Josipovic - President of Croatia (2010-2015)²

Naila Kabeer - Professor of Gender and International Development at the London School of Economics

Michel Kazatchkine - Special Advisor to the Joint United Nations Programme on AIDS (UNAIDS) in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and Senior Fellow, Global Health Center, the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva

Rima Khalaf - President of the Global Organization against Racial Discrimination and Segregation, and Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (2010-2017)

Horst Köhler - President of Germany (2004-2010)¹

Jadranka Kosor - Prime Minister of Croatia (2009-2011)²

Bernard Kouchner - Minister of Health of France (1992-1993, 1997-1999, 2001-2002), Minister of Foreign affairs of France (2007-2010); founder of Médecins sans frontières / Doctors Without Borders (MSF) and Médecins du Monde / Doctors of the World (MdM)

Chandrika Kumaratunga - President of Sri Lanka (1994-2005)¹

Aleksander Kwaśniewski - President of Poland (1995-2005)¹²

Rachel Kyte CMG - Dean of The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University

Luis Alberto Lacalle Herrera - President of Uruguay (1990-1995)¹

Ricardo Lagos - President of Chile (2000-2006)¹

Zlatko Lagumdzija - Prime Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2001-2002)¹²

Laura Liswood - Secretary General of the Council of Women World Leaders

Nora Lustig - President Emerita of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic Association, Professor of Latin American Economics, Tulane University

Jessie Rose Mabutas - Member of The African Capacity Building Foundation, International Senior Consultant at UNDP

Graça Machel - Founder of the Graça Machel Trust, Deputy Chair of the Elders

Susana Malcorra - Minister of Foreign Affairs of Argentina (2015-2017)

Isabel Saint Malo - Vice President of Panama (2014-2019)

Purnima Mane - Global expert on gender, HIV and sexual and reproductive health issues, President of Pathfinder International (2012-2016)

Mariana Mazzucato - Professor at University College London and Founding Director of the UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose (IIPP)

Mary McAleese - President of Ireland (1997-2011)

Rexhep Meidani - President of Albania (1997-2002)¹²

Carlos Mesa - President of Bolivia (2003-2005)¹

Branko Milanovic - Visiting Presidential Professor at the Graduate Center City University of New York

Aïchatou Mindaoudou - United Nations' Special Representative for Côte d'Ivoire and Head of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (2013-2017)

Festus Mogae - President of the Republic of Botswana (1998-2008) and Champion for an AIDS- Free Generation¹

Mario Monti - Prime Minister of Italy (2011-2013)¹

Kgalema Motlanthe - President of the Republic of South Africa (2008-2009) and Champion for an AIDS- Free Generation

Rovshan Muradov - Secretary General, Nizami Ganjavi International Center

Bujar Nishani - President of Albania (2012-2017)²

Dr. John Nkengasong - Director of African Centres for Disease Control and Prevention

Olusegun Obasanjo - President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999-2007) and Champion for an AIDS- Free Generation¹

Djoomart Otorbayev - Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan (2014-2015)²

Roza Otunbayeva - President of Kyrgyzstan (2010-2011)¹

Ana Palacio - Minister of Foreign Affairs of Spain (2002-2004)

Dr. David Pan - Executive Dean, Steve Swarcman College, Tsinghua University China²

Flavia Pansieri - Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights (2013-2015)

Elsa Papademetriou - former Vice President of the Hellenic Republic (2007-2009)²

Andres Pastrana - President of Colombia (1998-2002)¹

Kate Pickett - Professor of Epidemiology at the University of York

Thomas Piketty - Professor of Economics at the Paris School of Economics and a co-director of the World Inequality Database

Rosen Plevneliev - President of Bulgaria (2012-2017)²

Hifikepunye Pohamba - President of the Republic of Namibia (2005-2015) and Champion for an AIDS- Free Generation

Karin Sham Pòo - Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF (1987-2004)

Achal Prabhala - Coordinator of the AccessIBSA project

Dainius Puras - Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health

Iveta Radicova - Prime Minister of Slovakia (2010-2012)¹

José Manuel Ramos-Horta - President of Timor Leste (2007-2012)¹

J.V.R. Prasada Rao - Special Envoy to the Secretary General of the UN on AIDS (2012-2017) and Health Secretary of the Government of India (2002-2004)

Geeta Rao Gupta - Executive Director of the 3D Program for Girls and Women and Senior Fellow at the United Nations Foundation

Oscar Ribas - Prime Minister of Andorra (1982-84; 1990-94)¹²

Mary Robinson - President of Ireland (1990-1997), UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Chair of the Elders

Dani Rodrik - President-Elect of the International Economic Association, Professor of International Political Economy, Harvard University

Petre Roman - Prime Minister of Romania (1989-1991)¹

Juan Manuel Santos - President of Colombia (2010-2018), 2016 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Member of the Elders and Conservation International Arnhold Distinguished Fellow

Kailash Satyarthi - Nobel Peace Prize Laureate (2014) and Child Rights Activist

Ismail Serageldin - Co-Chair Nizami Ganjavi International Center, Senior VP of the World Bank (1992-2000)²

Fatiha Serour - Africa Group for Justice & Accountability

Michel Sidibé - Minister of Health and Social Affairs of Mali

Mari Simonen - Former Assistant Secretary General of the UN and Deputy Executive Director of UNFPA

Pierre Somse - Minister of Health and Population of Central Africa Republic

Vera Songwe - Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

Michael Spence - Nobel Laureate for Economic Sciences (2001), William R. Berkley Professor in Economics & Business, NYU

Joseph E. Stiglitz - a Nobel laureate in economics and University Professor at Columbia University

Eka Tkeshelashvili - Deputy Prime Minister of Georgia (2010-2012)²

Aminata Touré - Prime Minister of Senegal (2013-2014)¹

Danilo Türk - President of Slovenia (2007-2012)¹

Cassam Uteem - President of Mauritius (1992-2002)¹

Marianna V. Vardinoyannis - Goodwill Ambassador of UNESCO²

Ann Veneman - Executive Director of UNICEF (2005-2010)

Chema Vera - Executive Director (Interim) of Oxfam International

Melanne Verveer - United States Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues (2009-2013), Executive Director of the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security at Georgetown University

Filip Vujanovic - President of Montenegro (2003-2018)²

Margot Wallström - Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden (2014-2019)

Richard Wilkinson - Emeritus Professor of Social Epidemiology, University of Nottingham Medical School

Kateryna Yushchenko - First Lady of Ukraine (2005-2010)²

Viktor Yushchenko - President of Ukraine (2005-2010)²

José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero - President of the Government of Spain (2004-2011)¹

Valdis Zatlers - President of Latvia (2007-2011)²

Ernesto Zedillo - President of Mexico (1994-2000)¹

Gabriel Zucman - Professor of Economics at UC Berkeley

¹ *Member of WLA Club de Madrid*

² *Member of Nizami Ganjavi International Center (NGIC)*