



PROGRESSIVE ALLIANCE **ALLIANCE PROGRESSISTE**

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PROGRESSIVE ALLIANCE STATEMENT

Global solidarity is the key to overcoming COVID-19

COVID-19 has been and continues to be an exceptional challenge for all of us. The only way forward is a quick and well-coordinated vaccination strategy on a global level with an increase of production capacity and a distribution according to actual need, not based on the size of a country's wallet. Vulnerable people and frontline workers shall be vaccinated first, regardless where they live in the world.

Hesitation and national self-interest will not bring an end to the global health crisis nor will it lead us out of the economic, environmental and social crisis. Instead, it will be a gross error of misjudgement from both a moral and a medical point of view. Vaccine nationalism causes severe geopolitical as well as economic and social consequences and prevents an effective fight against the virus.

Too many people have suffered attacks on their health and too many have paid the ultimate price. Each loss of life to COVID-19 is one loss too much!

With the successful development of COVID-19 vaccines, a debate has been sparked around sufficient and fair distribution of the limited doses available. While some countries have been quick to secure supplies, others, especially low and middle-income countries have no access yet.

COVAX has been set up as the multilateral answer to this challenge. It aims to achieve global immunization and is central to a global vaccination strategy that shall secure fair and equal distribution.

However, as it stands, these tools have yet to deliver to secure substantial vaccines for the Global South facing two major challenges: a lack of funding and the limited availability of vaccines on the market.

The COVAX funding gap needs to be closed as soon as possible to roll out the ambitious global goal of COVAX. We must also support the vaccination plan with concrete efforts in diagnostics and therapeutics of COVID-19.

With different vaccines now developed, it is the time to step up vaccine production. Any slow-down in vaccine production is unacceptable, especially when it stems from profit maximization or vaccine-nationalism.

The solutions exist: increase of production is possible if vaccine developers cooperate voluntarily, supply available production capacities, share licenses with other manufacturers and accept to transfer the necessary technology. Countries of patent holders can also issue compulsory licenses in order to speed up production. As a consequence there shall be a binding obligation for partnerships with manufactures in developing countries in all future vaccine supply contracts.

A multilateral understanding at WTO level must avoid unnecessary administrative hurdles, to prevent stockpiling and to put the fast and fair production and distribution of vaccines before profit-making. A possible (timely limited) patent waiver has the benefit as it also provides a clear and consistent direction to patent offices and courts on how to view the grant and enforcement of intellectual property and prevent the possibility of disputes which could delay local manufacturing.

These are the steps needed to go hand-in-hand with strengthening and supporting health systems through social investment, ensuring access to healthcare and social protection systems, and access to education.

The unequal access to vaccines and COVID-19 treatment is a mirror on the inequalities between and within states that are also harming our pandemic response and our recovery. Only when everyone has had the chance to be vaccinated and we successfully achieved immunization for a sufficient share of each population, we are truly safe. The longer the virus is around, the more chances of it mutating and thus the higher the probability vaccines need to be adapted to

combat the newest varieties. Then we must acknowledge that competition for vaccines at the global level can never be part of the solution, it is part of the problem.

We progressives unite behind a global strategy to combat COVID-19. This will not be possible without solidarity between continents, countries and people. A world without COVID-19 is possible. We will continue to work together to reach this goal, not as competitors, but as partners on equal footing.

As Progressive Alliance we call for:

- Global solidarity and global partnership against the poison of vaccine-nationalism
- Safeguarding COVID-19-vaccines as a global public good, not a tool for profit-maximization
- Binding obligation for partnerships and building production capacities with manufactures in developing countries in all vaccine supply contracts with manufactures by industrialized countries.
- Increasing the production of vaccines globally through adequate measures including reassessing the TRIPS agreement to see if it is fit for purpose and investigate how technology transfer can be enabled
- Ensuring accessibility to vaccines for all, in particular for vulnerable people, frontline workers and healthcare workers worldwide and in particular in the global South. Industrialized countries should supply the Global South with doses from their overcapacities
- The obligation of vaccine manufacturers, laboratories and producers to sell their products to the Global South and to COVAX at the cost price only and to allow licensing at low cost
- Reject all contractual agreements limiting exports, sharing, and donations of vaccines, which put an end to the global suffering.
- Introduce wealth and financial transaction tax schemes to ensure closing of the funding gaps of COVAX
- Continue and upscale public investment in medical research and public health systems especially in the Global South.