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# UNAIDS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REMARKS

**HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE ON “EXPANDING COVID19 VACCINE  
MANUFACTURE TO PROMOTE EQUITABLE ACCESS”**

**HOSTED BY WHO AND WTO**

**22 July 2021**



I am delighted to join you today.

I congratulate Dr Tedros and Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala for their leadership and for convening this important dialogue. I am speaking for UNAIDS and on behalf of the People's Vaccine Alliance.

We are coming together as many parts of the world are struggling under third and fourth waves, including in my own country Uganda, and the world is split into two: the vaccine haves and have nots.

There are 80 vaccine doses per 100 people in rich countries. That figure is just 1.3 per 100 people in low-income countries.

This has been called a vaccine apartheid by the President of South Africa and it is not an accident. It was predictable. We, the People's Vaccine alliance, warned about it 14 months ago.

In what will be remembered as one of the cruelest acts of recent history, a handful of pharmaceutical companies and rich country leaders have decided to resist granting developing countries the rights and the know how to produce vaccines to save lives.

To expand COVID-19 vaccine manufacturing to promote equitable access, there are 3 critical actions.

Firstly, rapid scaling up of the sharing of know-how and transferring of technology. This has to be through non-exclusive transparent licenses, open to public scrutiny. This will enhance production and competition, which will bring prices down. The mechanism to facilitate this process is there – the COVID-19 Technology Access Pool (C-TAP). Therefore, governments – especially those hosting pharmaceutical companies – must urgently use all the policy and legal tools available to insist that their companies join C-TAP, this should include providing incentives including financing technology transfer.

Second, we need pragmatic approaches to intellectual property.

This means using this crisis not only to address IP-related barriers to scale up manufacturing now, but to reform the IP system as part of pandemic preparedness.

Pragmatism in such a global health crisis of this unprecedented scale would require compelling companies to immediately waive IP protections and share technology rather than waiting for individual companies' voluntary action that never seems to come.

It is pragmatic also to waive IP protections on therapeutics and diagnostics.

Thirdly, we need a huge scale up in financing for manufacturing capacity in developing countries, so these countries are never again left dependent on the goodwill of rich countries to access life-saving vaccines in a pandemic.

We have the responsibility as global institutions to persuade all governments to take these concrete steps to protect people's life, health and livelihood. World leaders must learn from the tragedy of access to HIV treatment, and should not need to wait for years and for millions more lives to be lost before needed actions are taken.

Thank you.

