

September 20, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

We are writing to you ahead of the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) to urge that you take on a global leadership role and fulfill your promise of addressing COVID-19 around the world. We understand that during the UNGA, you will be hosting a global vaccine summit with participation of other world leaders where you will be announcing an admirable target of 70% of the world's population to be vaccinated within the next year. Reaching this goal, however, will be impossible unless you and other world leaders take action to ensure equitable vaccine distribution.

While it is commendable that your administration has procured and distributed COVID-19 vaccines to other countries in need, we cannot “donate” our way to safety. The massive global shortage of highly effective vaccines can only be addressed by increasing production. As of this week, just over 3% of people in low-income countries, many of whom are also facing devastating surges from deadly variants, have received any dose of COVID-19 vaccine. COVAX, the global program intended to secure and distribute doses for low- and middle-income countries is failing. Recently, COVAX cut its forecast for doses available in 2021 by a quarter, driven in large part by wealthier nations stockpiling excess doses in lieu of providing these vaccines and funds to this global program. As your administration considers distributing third booster doses to a broader population of Americans, it must not ignore the equity considerations of such a policy in further delaying vaccine access to people in the Global South, many of whom have yet to receive even a single dose. Moreover, such an approach may also only further fuel the emergence of even more virulent variants, which thrive in unvaccinated populations.

To truly make America the world's “arsenal” of global vaccine access, we ask that you immediately deliver on the following policies:

- launch an ambitious global vaccine manufacturing program with other countries to help produce billions more highly effective doses within one year and support a dedicated financing line item in the Build Back Better Act committing billions of dollars to this effort;
- use your full authorities to require the few firms with monopolies over effective vaccines, diagnostics, and therapeutics to transfer technology and production know-how to manufacturers in the Global South;

- set an example for other countries by reallocating excess doses available to countries in the Global South via COVAX or regional procurement mechanisms; and
- work with allied countries on a final text to speedily enact a temporary, emergency waiver of certain World Trade Organization’s (WTO) Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property (TRIPS) rules that create barriers to widespread production of COVID-19 health technologies including vaccines, diagnostics, and treatments.

Attached are further details of why these four steps are critically important towards realizing the goal of vaccinating 70% of the world’s population within the next year. We also outline the tremendous capability you have to carry forward these policies to end this pandemic. Your leadership on these above steps is urgently needed to move the world closer to a future where the pandemic truly ends for everyone, everywhere. At the UNGA, we hope that you will not just offer more promises for these urgently needed policy measures, but that you will take on a global leadership role in implementing them. Short of such action, the pandemic will continue its devastation, driven by a lack of political will to truly engage in a global, collective effort to protect everyone, everywhere.

Sincerely,

Action Corps	National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
Africa Faith and Justice Network	National Nurses United
AIDS Healthcare Foundation	Network Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Alianza Americas	New York Doctors Coalition
American Federation of Teachers Connecticut	New York Trade Justice Coalition
American Jewish World Service	New York Trade Justice Coalition
American Medical Student Association	Oxfam America
Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network	Plateforme de la Diaspora Tchadienne en America
Bangladesh Krishok Federation	Progressive Doctors
BARAC UK	Public Citizen
CASA	Rise and Resist

Center for Popular Democracy
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity
of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces
Doctors For America
Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative
(DNDi) North America
Faith for Safe Water
Fondation Eboko
Foundation for Integrative AIDS Research
Free the Vaccine for COVID-19
Global Health Partners
Health GAP (Global Access Project)
Hope for Future Generations
Human Rights Watch
IFARMA Foundation
I-MAK
Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
Médecins Sans Frontières USA
Metro New York Health Care for All

Salud y Farmacos
SECTION27
Service Employees International Union
Showing Up for Racial Justice NYC
Social Security Works
Society for International Development
SODECA- KENYA
Sojourners
Sukaar Welfare Organization
The Episcopal Church
The United Methodist Church - General Board
of Church and Society
Third World Network
Treatment Action Group
Unity Fellowship of Christ Church NYC
Universities Allied for Essential Medicines
VOCAL-NY
Washington Office on Latin America
World Renew

Enclosure: Attachment