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Rt Hon Matthew Hancock MP
Department of Health & Social Care
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18th May 2020

Dear Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Health,

Today as Governments convene at the World Health Assembly, we are [deeply concerned to read that the UK](#) has been pushing back against ideas for a global COVID19 technology pool.

Whilst the UK has taken many important steps to support the development of vaccines and treatments to combat the pandemic, failing to support this initiative to facilitate production and affordable access to the fruits of that innovation investment risks fatally undermining the global response.

Furthermore we are alarmed to also read that [the UK is seeking to secure preferential access to the vaccine candidate under development by the University of Oxford](#).

Whilst this may appear to be a positive move for NHS staff and patients, in reality this increases the risk that other countries will do the same. The process of developing a vaccine is an extremely uncertain one, and a breakthrough could equally emerge from a research project in another country. If other countries follow a similar approach as the UK has proposed and restrict initial access to a vaccine to its own citizens then we risk it taking even longer for us to get access.

Indeed the UK public overwhelmingly support equitable global access to COVID-19 vaccines and treatments. A recent YouGov poll found 96% of the UK public supported the idea that national

governments should work together to ensure that treatments and vaccines can be manufactured in as many countries as possible and distributed globally to everyone who needs them.

The only effective response to this pandemic is global coordination. Failure to support it will likely lead to monopoly restrictions affecting production capacity, access and price to the detriment of global health and the UK response. We urgently ask that you:

- Publicly and actively support the COVID19 technology pool initiative
- Attach transparent conditions to all UK funding to prevent monopolies and facilitate access
- Commit to getting any UK supported vaccine to all those who need it through an internationally agreed mechanism that puts need before narrow national interest.

The first steps on this should be public support for the pool at the WHA this week, and publication of the full details of the agreement reached with AstraZeneca to licence the Oxford vaccine.

We look forward to global Britain leading the world on these critical issues for humanity.

Yours sincerely,

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Dr Danny Sriskandarajah
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