



To: Board members, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance
Global Health Campus
Chemin du Pommier 40
1218 Grand-Saconnex
Geneva, Switzerland

16th December 2020

Dear Gavi Board members,

Making COVAX work.

We are writing to you all to urge you to take the necessary actions at this week's GAVI Board Meeting to ensure that the COVAX Facility (COVAX) can truly help to deliver a vaccine for the world.

We write to you as "The People's Vaccine", which is a global coalition of organisations and activists demanding the open sharing of technology by all vaccine producers to enable the maximum supply of vaccines free to all who need them.

Our recent [analysis](#) clearly illustrates that rich nations representing just 14 per cent of the world's population have bought 53 per cent of all the most promising vaccines so far. Enough to vaccinate their populations 3 times over. This means that 9 out of 10 people in most developing countries are set to miss out on COVID-19 vaccine next year. With this looming vaccine apartheid, COVAX's mission must be an antidote to this short-sighted vaccine nationalism. Yet unless the significant flaws in COVAX's design are addressed this objective will not be met.

In September, we called on all GAVI Board members to act in four key areas to ensure COVAX is fit for purpose. These were using GAVI's market shaping power and voice to press for sharing of technology and intellectual property; full transparency; the rejection of tiered pricing and full participation of civil society. Sadly, we received only two responses to our September letter.

In advance of your next discussion of COVAX this week, we write to stress these issues once again and to focus on three key areas where immediate action should be taken:

First GAVI must openly support the WHO Covid Technology Access Pool urgently to maximise the supply of vaccines. With rich countries buying up most vaccine doses, COVAX is becoming last in the queue, thus in real danger of failing. Maximising production of vaccines is paramount to protect people everywhere. Without increased supply, COVAX will always struggle to find enough doses in an environment of supply scarcity due to

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pharmaceutical companies' tight hold on their technology, know-how and patents. Maximising production requires open sharing of technology and intellectual property to encourage more competent vaccine producers to join the supply line.

The COVAX Facility is missing an historic opportunity to reshape the market to ensure a sustainable supply of affordable vaccines for all. In COVAX's largely "business as usual" approach to intellectual property, despite unprecedented levels of public funding, companies ultimately still have the power to control who gets access to these vaccines, when they get access and at what price. Far from being a public good, these vaccines are fast becoming private property, sold to the highest bidder.

The COVAX Facility and GAVI leadership must leverage their significant market power and political voice to require that manufacturers receiving its funds share their intellectual property, technologies, know-how and data in such a way that guarantees the non-exclusive right to use, produce and supply for all competent entities worldwide. GAVI's complete silence on this issue enables rich nations instead to support the failing status quo whilst hiding behind their supposed commitment to COVAX and global vaccine access.

We urge you to use this Board Meeting to publicly support the COVID-19 Technology Access Pool as a mechanism to increase production and therefore access to the vaccines worldwide.

Second, the COVAX exchange must not become a vehicle for further vaccine inequality.

The proposed 'COVAX Exchange' should not become a 'marketplace' designed by and exclusively used by self-financing countries. Sustainable vaccine supply cannot be predicated on the largesse of rich nations disposing of unwanted vaccine stocks. The 'Exchange' risks creating further vaccine inequality by leaving lower income countries with less effective or less suitable vaccines. Only self-financing country governments have so far been involved in the design of the Exchange. Lower income countries and civil society must play an active role in designing the Exchange so that it can be equitable, effective, and genuinely global in scope.

Finally, you must ensure doses are reserved for those facing humanitarian crises.

On what is known as the Humanitarian Buffer, we think that there should be, at a minimum, 5% of doses from the AMC supply allocated to this buffer. Within this, at least 3% for the component of the buffer that is meant to address vaccination needs of crisis-affected populations. To ensure fairness and effectiveness, it is critical that the Buffer is led by WHO in coordination with the humanitarian community. There should be a clear separation between the role of donors and that of technical agencies that have the competency to determine use and allocation of the buffer.

Until everyone is vaccinated, no one is safe. A COVID-19 vaccine should be a global public good, affordable for all governments and free of charge to all people. GAVI could have a key

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THE PEOPLE'S VACCINE

role in making this happen, but so far it is choosing instead to support the failed status quo, one that will see many developing countries wait years before their citizens are safe.

We urge you to seize upon the opportunity of this week's meeting to ensure the needed changes. Only then can the COVAX Facility truly fulfil its role in delivering COVID-19 vaccines equitably and fairly. Only this will be able to truly deliver a People's Vaccine for the world.

Yours sincerely,

Max Lawson

Chair, People's Vaccine Alliance

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