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Dear leaders of the G7,

On behalf of the 10 million health workers we represent, in the UK and in over 150 countries, we write to convey the urgent need for countries of the Group of 7 to support the temporary waiver of certain intellectual property protection measures for Covid-19 health technologies.

We are approaching 3.5 million deaths from a pandemic and there is no end in sight. There is urgency to use all the tools available to tame the pandemic. Yet, the rich countries of the G7 have continuously put aside the TRIPS Waiver proposal for more than eight months. The time has come to give priority to the adoption of the TRIPS Waiver proposal as released on 21 May.

There is an urgency. Mutations have increased the complexity of the challenge we face and the risk of new strains making vaccines less effective is a serious concern. We need to ensure sufficient volume of, and equitable access to, COVID-19 vaccines and therapeutics around the world. This is essential to ensure all global economies can recover from the pandemic and thrive. We must make vaccines, testing, and treatments available everywhere if we are going to crush the virus anywhere.

We are concerned that G7 countries are relying on voluntary approaches that have to date failed to mobilise global manufacturing capacity and contributed to exacerbating the inequity by artificially constraining global supply and prioritising supply to rich countries. By the end of April, over 1.3 billion doses had been administered worldwide, but only 0.2% of vaccines had been given in low-income countries. We cannot wait to have exhausted one solution before turning to another.

Arguments that the quality of the vaccines and other health technologies will be negatively impacted by a TRIPS waiver are disingenuous. Issues of quality, safety and efficacy are matters handled by national regulatory authorities and the pre-qualification mechanisms of the World Health Organisations and are not linked to IP protection.

It is appalling that the existing capacity for manufacturing required vaccines is lying unused while most of the world faces shortages in supply. According to the World Health Organization, 19 manufacturers from more than a dozen countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America have expressed interest in ramping up mRNA vaccine production.

Manufacturers in low and middle-income countries are already critical to overall immunisation efforts worldwide. In 2018, they provided over half of the 2.4 billion vaccine doses procured by UNICEF. India has dozens of facilities that meet global quality standards. Some firms may need capacity enhancements and specific quality control protocols for specific drugs. The TRIPS waiver would bring the required legal predictability and stability to making such investments.

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The arguments that a temporary waiver will undermine future innovation are flimsy at best. Vast sums of public money have driven research into vaccines and accelerated the process. It is estimated that Pfizer, Johnson and Johnson and AstraZeneca, have paid out \$26 billion in dividends and stock buybacks alone in the last 12 months – enough to vaccinate 1.3 billion people or the entire population of Africa. The provisions that allow for the waiver were established in anticipation of exceptional circumstances. If a global health emergency created by a pandemic is not an exceptional circumstance, then what is?

The announcement of USA's support for a waiver has opened the door for constructive engagement on the text. The revised text released on 21 May addressed concerns raised by many G7 countries, such as defining a precise scope of the waiver, defining the timeframe for this temporary proposal, and recognising the importance of preserving incentives for research and innovation.

We are concerned that, at the informal TRIPS meeting of 31 May, Australia, Japan, the UK, and the European Union, speaking on behalf of Germany and Italy are amongst a handful of countries that are expressing doubts about the relevance of the waiver and asking for more time.

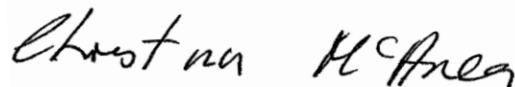
Our members and health care workers who have sacrificed, too often with their lives, can see no valid reason for not taking decisive action. We wish to make clear to you that governments who prioritise the profits of large pharmaceutical companies over protecting lives are making a mockery of their sacrifice.

The world is watching. No country will be able to hide its obstructing game behind a veil of raising open ended questions anymore.

We urge you to act and to make clear that the G7 countries support a TRIPS waiver.



Rosa Pavanelli  
PSI General Secretary



Christina McAnea  
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