



# General Assembly

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Agenda item 131

### Global health and foreign policy

#### **Letter dated 24 March 2021 from the representatives of Brazil, Egypt, Fiji, India, Kenya, Lebanon, Mexico, Norway, Pakistan, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the European Union to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

On behalf of the delegations of Brazil, Denmark, Egypt, Fiji, Germany, India, Italy, Kenya, Lebanon, Mexico, Norway, Pakistan, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the European Union, we have the honour to transmit herewith the Political Declaration on Equitable Global Access to COVID-19 Vaccines (see annex).

To date, the political declaration, prepared by the aforementioned delegations, has garnered support from 179 delegations.

The President of the General Assembly will convene an informal meeting on Friday, 26 March 2021, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., to launch the political declaration. We hope to count on your presence in this informal meeting of the General Assembly.

We should be grateful if you would have the political declaration circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 131.

*(Signed)* Ronaldo **Costa Filho**

Ambassador

Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations

*(Signed)* Mohamed **Edrees**

Ambassador

Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt  
to the United Nations

*(Signed)* Satyendra **Prasad**

Ambassador

Permanent Representative of the Republic of Fiji to the United Nations



*(Signed)* T. S. **Tirumurti**  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations

*(Signed)* Martin **Kimani**  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kenya  
to the United Nations, New York

*(Signed)* Amal **Mudallali**  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations

*(Signed)* Juan Ramón **de la Fuente Ramirez**  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations

*(Signed)* Mona **Juul**  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative of Norway to the United Nations

*(Signed)* Munir **Akram**  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations

*(Signed)* Alya Ahmed Saif **Al-Thani**  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the United Nations

*(Signed)* **Cho** Hyun  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations

*(Signed)* Inga Rhonda **King**  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines  
to the United Nations

*(Signed)* Cheikh **Niang**  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations

*(Signed)* Barbara **Woodward**  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the United Nations

*(Signed)* Olof **Skoog**  
Ambassador  
Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations

**Annex to the letter dated 24 March 2021 from the representatives of Brazil, Egypt, Fiji, India, Kenya, Lebanon, Mexico, Norway, Pakistan, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the European Union to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

[Original: English]

**Political Declaration on Equitable Global Access to COVID-19 Vaccines**

1. We, representatives of the Peoples of the United Nations and its Member States, are determined in the face of the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and the devastating and multifaceted effects it has on humanity, to work together as one to defeat the pandemic and help people and the planet to recover better.
2. We applaud the scientific community and recognize the unprecedented scientific research and collaboration among governments, international institutions and the private sector, which resulted in the development and production of several COVID-19 vaccines in record time, giving the world renewed hope after the severe disruptions the pandemic caused to societies, economies, global trade and travel, with devastating effects on livelihoods.
3. We can see the end of the crisis, but to reach it, we need to work together with a deeper sense of collaboration. We remain committed to multilateralism and international cooperation as our only way to overcome the pandemic safely, equitably and sustainably.
4. We strongly believe that “no one can be safe, until everyone is safe”, and that equitable and affordable access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines must be ensured to have a speedy recovery and contribute to putting an end to the pandemic.
5. We are encouraged by the roll-out of the first allocations of WHO-approved COVID-19 vaccines, particularly through the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) initiative, reaching millions of people. We appreciate the generosity of many Member States, international organizations, philanthropists and vaccine producers for their initiatives to make the vaccine available to those who need it most, especially vulnerable countries and people in vulnerable situations.
6. We urge all governments and the Secretary-General of the United Nations to implement relevant UN resolutions and commitments, in particular on international cooperation to ensure global access to safe and efficacious medicines, vaccines and medical equipment to face COVID-19.
7. We reaffirm the primary responsibility of governments for adopting and implementing responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the central role of the United Nations system in coordinating the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic and immunization. In this regard, we also reaffirm the crucial role of governments, the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, including COVAX, as well as the role of the World Health Organization and other stakeholders.
8. We are deeply concerned that despite international agreements, initiatives, and general declarations, distribution of COVID-19 vaccines is still uneven worldwide, both among and within countries. Therefore, we express our deep concern that a considerable number of countries have not yet had access to COVID-19 vaccines, and stress the need for global solidarity and multilateral cooperation to increase vaccines production and distribution, on regional and global levels.

In this regard, we unite to declare the following:

9. We pledge to treat COVID-19 vaccination as a global public good by ensuring affordable, equitable and fair access to vaccines for all, with COVAX being the appropriate mechanism to guarantee it.

10. We are deeply concerned about the low availability of COVID-19 vaccines in low- and middle-income countries. In this regard, we welcome the efforts of countries which have donated COVID-19 vaccines, and actively encourage further sharing of vaccine doses from all countries in a position to do so, to low- and middle-income countries and other countries in need, particularly through COVAX, including on the basis of the WHO allocation framework, for fair access and equitable allocation of COVID-19 health products.

11. We commit to solidarity and intensified international cooperation, giving equal regard to the needs of all human beings, especially people in vulnerable situations, to be protected from the coronavirus disease, regardless of nationality, or location and without any kind of discrimination.

12. We also commit to ensuring transparent and fair access to vaccines to those at a higher risk of developing severe COVID-19 symptoms and the most vulnerable, on the basis of medical and ethical standards.

13. We acknowledge the initiatives undertaken by the G20 since the outbreak of the pandemic and call on the group to further collaborate with the United Nations and the international community to upscale support and funding for vaccine production and distribution, to defeat the pandemic and put the world economy back on track while leaving no one behind.

14. We welcome the significant commitments of the G7 relevant to COVID-19, and call on the group to make vaccine equity and accessibility at the upcoming G7 summit one of the group's top priorities.

15. We urge Member States to significantly increase their support to the COVAX contracts with vaccine producers, not limiting the availability of vaccines as a result of competing bilateral contracts.

16. We call for full funding of the ACT Accelerator, including COVAX. The ACT Accelerator's efforts to speed up the development, production, and equitable access to COVID-19 tests, treatments, and vaccines, are commendable but hampered by insufficient funding. These mechanisms represent the most effective ways to ensure that no one is left behind.

17. We encourage all countries to include financial contributions to the ACT Accelerator in their recovery plans, particularly to COVAX, in order to reach the global financing goal, while highlighting that investing in COVAX is also a sound and important investment for a sustainable and resilient recovery. We further express our support for the Inter-agency Supply Chain Task Force and request the Secretary-General to ensure that the entire UN System is coordinated to deliver vaccines to all countries that request it, including distribution to the most vulnerable populations, wherever they may be.

18. We call for the rapid scaling up and expansion of vaccine production globally, including in developing countries, through appropriate dissemination of technology and know-how, e.g., licensing in accordance with World Trade Organization rules, using TRIPS flexibilities if necessary, sharing knowledge, and data related to COVID-19 health technologies. We express our willingness to forge robust partnerships with the private sector and international organizations, particularly the World Health Organization, to increase production, distribution and access to COVID-19 vaccines. We call upon governments and the private sector to cooperate in order to ensure that

all persons have greater certainty with regards to the equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines, addressing national challenges relevant to distribution. Such cooperation should ensure safety, effectiveness and transparency, and facilitate timely availability, accessibility, acceptability, affordability, and acquisition.

19. We commit to preventing vaccine inequity among countries while working together in the spirit of solidarity and cooperation. We also commit to preventing speculation and undue stockpiling that may hinder access to safe and effective vaccines. Undue stockpiling of vaccines is unnecessary, counterproductive and self-defeating, and can prolong the life of the pandemic instead of ending it.

20. We underline the importance of vaccine preparedness and the important role of resilient health systems in the fight against COVID-19, and request further support and access to concessional funding and other financial measures by multilateral financial organizations, for any country that requires it, to help them meet national vaccine requirements and improve national health systems, preparedness, health infrastructure and support to the health workforce, ensure efficient supply chains and logistics, to overcome challenges related to vaccine storage, distribution, and management, especially in areas where health infrastructure is weak, including in least developed countries and crises-affected countries.

21. We call for an immediate implementation of the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire, in order to facilitate vaccination processes, and encourage governments to support vaccines roll-out as part of their humanitarian assistance. In the same vein, we express deep appreciation for the UN personnel in UN peacekeeping operations, including efforts of troop- and police-contributing countries, in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences, and stress the importance of ensuring the vaccination of peacekeeping contingents.

22. We are concerned about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on other immunization programs. In this regard, we reaffirm our commitment to universal health coverage, including for immunization, and call upon all governments, donors and all relevant stakeholders to redouble their efforts to ensure that funding relevant to routine vaccination campaigns is not diverted to meet the requirements posed by COVID-19, and that national health systems are strengthened, including the health workforce, in order to address systemic health issues beyond COVID-19.

23. We commit to addressing misinformation and countering vaccine hesitancy, and working towards providing timely and transparent information regarding the prices, safety and efficacy of different types of vaccines. We must ensure that vaccines are properly tested and that relevant data is made publicly available for transparency and credibility purposes. We are cognizant of the need to sensitize our populations on the pressing need to receive the vaccine, on the basis of science, evidence and data. In this regard, we will cooperate with the Secretary-General's "Verified" initiative and urge the United Nations to contribute to countering vaccine hesitancy in all parts of the world.

24. We urge countries to launch public information campaigns capitalizing, *inter alia*, on the power of social media, to sensitize people on the importance and safety of COVID-19 vaccines.

25. We pledge continued collaboration to ensure global coordination for equitable and timely allocation of COVID-19 vaccines. The time to go beyond rhetoric is now. The forum to promote cooperation is the United Nations. Our governments will spare no effort in making our aspiration a reality.

26. As a follow-up to this political declaration, we invite the Secretary-General to continue working with Member States, the ACT Accelerator, and other stakeholders to mobilize global resources, to address global vaccine inequality, and invite him to

provide regular briefings to the General Assembly on the progress of global COVID-19 immunization, including efforts and recommendations from the Organization. We commit to engaging and working together so that every member of our common humanity has equitable access to the life-saving contributions of science.

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