



# We Must End Trade-Pact Obstructions Against Global Production of COVID-19 Vaccines and Treatments

There can be no end to the public health disaster or economic crises anywhere if people in developing nations are not vaccinated. Vaccine apartheid is fuelling outbreaks that are costing millions of lives, pushing tens of millions more into poverty and hatching variants that spread more easily and infect vaccinated people.

- 1. Current production capacity can't supply enough vaccines, treatments, or diagnostic tests for the world.** The poorest countries may wait [until 2024 for mass immunization](#). More than halfway into 2021, [vaccine production since 2020 hit only 4.25 billion doses](#) while 11-15 billion are needed for global herd immunity. Building greater supply capacity is vital: By late 2021, major vaccine producers will [start shifting production to boosters](#) for sale at higher profits in rich nations while billions of people in developing nations have not had initial immunizations.
- 2. Monopoly patent protections and other intellectual property exclusivities mean a few pharmaceutical firms control how much and where vaccines, tests and treatments are made.** This after governments invested our tax dollars to develop vaccines. One estimate show governments gave more than \$112 billion for vaccine development.
- 3. The WTO requires its 159 member nations to provide pharmaceutical firms these monopoly controls** in a text called the WTO's Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property or "TRIPS".
- 4. A temporary COVID-19 emergency [waiver of some WTO TRIPS intellectual property barriers](#) would remove a key obstacle to making enough vaccines, medicines and tests to prevent, treat and control COVID-19.** It would free countries to adjust policies to respond to the pandemic and facilitate investment in more production capacity.
- 5. Germany has pushed the European Union into blocking the waiver that 130+ nations support.** Switzerland and the UK also oppose. These anti-waiver nations are well vaccinated while many poor nations have no shots. In May 2021, the U.S. announced support for a waiver for vaccines but has not prioritized getting it enacted.
- 6. Every region of the world has firms that can make vaccines, treatments and tests if intellectual property barriers are waived.** Some vaccine makers contract with these firms, but limit how much is made and where its sold.
- 7. To scale up supply as quickly as possible and democratize vaccine production capacity requires three doable steps.** 1) Remove intellectual property barriers with a temporary WTO TRIPS waiver. 2) Speed up production by transferring technology, so more producers know quickly how to make the shots. 3) Provide sufficient [funding to retrofit and add production lines to existing manufacturing facilities](#) around the world.
- 8. During the height of the HIV-AIDS crisis, the U.S. and other wealthy countries opposed "flexibilities" in WTO rules and millions died needlessly.** The flexibilities ultimately were agreed upon to mitigate some negative impacts intellectual property rules may have on public health. But these tools are not designed to fight a global pandemic. Plus, countries that have tried using the flexibilities in the past have faced fierce U.S. opposition. The EU, in an attempt to derail the TRIPS waiver negotiations, is now pushing for a WTO Declaration that [reaffirms these existing flexibilities](#) that are [not workable for necessary scale-up of COVID-19 vaccines, test and treatments production](#).
- 9. Current global programs are not enough to immunize the majority of the world population as quickly as possible.** COVAX, a joint initiative of several international bodies, plans to distribute vaccines only to 20% of low- and middle-income countries' populations but cannot get enough vaccine supplies. Meanwhile, [not a single drug firm has donated rights](#) for COVID-19 medical technologies through the WHO COVID-19 Technology Pool.
- 10. Global economic losses of \$9.2 trillion are projected for 2021 under the current scenario of few people in developing nations being vaccinated, [with rich countries like the U.S. hardest hit](#).**

**Tell the Biden administration: get the TRIPS waiver enacted, vaccine technology transferred and enough funding allocated to greatly scale up production of COVID-19 vaccines, treatments and tests to crush the virus.**

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