



Statement of the People's Vaccine Alliance during the First Regular Session of the UNICEF Executive Board, 9 February 2021

Agenda Item 2: Opening statement by the President of the Executive Board; Opening statement of the Executive Director

Madam President, Executive Director Fore, Distinguished Members of the Board:

On behalf of People's Vaccine Alliance, I applaud UNICEF for leading the largest vaccine procurement operation the world has ever seen, on behalf of the COVAX Facility, and for supporting the global pandemic response with speed and commitment.

And I commend Executive Director Fore for calling attention to the catastrophic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic in every country, especially for the most disadvantaged children, families, and communities.

The People's Vaccine Alliance is a coalition of organisations and activists united in advocating for COVID-19 vaccines to be treated as a global public good – free and accessible to everyone, everywhere – a “people's vaccine.” Alliance members include UNAIDS, Amnesty International, Frontline AIDS, Global Justice Now, Open Society Foundations, Oxfam, Partners in Health, Public Citizen, SumofUs, the Yunus Centre, and many other civil society organizations. Our alliance grows larger each day.

Our call for a people's vaccine is backed by past and present world leaders, health experts, faith leaders and economists. It is also backed by the United Nations Secretary-General, the Director-General of the World Health Organization, and the Executive Director of UNAIDS. We are here today to urge UNICEF to join this pressing call.

The People's Vaccine Alliance asks UNICEF to join with us, and the hundreds of civil society organizations, and leaders in government, academia, faith and UN agencies – including WHO and UNAIDS – in strongly supporting the proposal by India and South Africa to the World Trade Organization to waive certain provisions of the TRIPS Agreement for the prevention, containment and treatment of COVID-19 during the pandemic.

We also urge UNICEF to join the People's Vaccine Alliance, and countries from the Netherlands, to Norway, to Mozambique, to Costa Rica, in supporting WHO's COVID-19 Technology Access Pool or C-TAP. WHO's Dr. Tedros has called upon all producers of

COVID-19 vaccine to share the science, technology and know-how behind their vaccine with C-TAP to ensure that it is available to everyone, everywhere.

As the world faces a desperate global vaccine shortage with the likelihood that billions of people in developing countries may wait years for access to a vaccine, the path out of the pandemic is through sharing the technology, know how for vaccines and waiving related intellectual property rights could help scale up manufacturing and expand the number of vaccine doses made.

As Executive Director Fore herself stated, “COVID-19 lit the fuse of what could be the largest disruption to global progress for children in modern history.” Given UNICEF’s massive advocacy and communications capacity, relationships with governments in more than 190 countries, and child rights mandate, we believe UNICEF can be a powerful ally. UNICEF can use its well-recognised position to support our calls for a people’s vaccine – including the TRIPS waiver and C-TAP – to make a people’s vaccine a reality.

Imagine what we can achieve together, if we choose to fight the global pandemic with our collective power. We can mobilize new production capabilities and share vaccine technology with qualified manufacturers around the world. We can overcome scarcity and rationing and ensure access for all.