

December 12, 2021

Ambassador Dacio CASTILLO
Chair, The WTO General Council
Centre William Rappard
Rue de Lausanne, 154
Case postale
1211 Genève 2
Switzerland

Dear Ambassador Dacio CASTILLO,

The undersigned religious organizations wish to express our deep concerns over the year-long delay in approving the temporary TRIPS waiver at the World Trade Organization. Waiving intellectual property rights for COVID-19 vaccines should be treated as an urgent matter. Approving TRIPS waiver would remove a critical barrier to enabling widespread manufacturing of vaccines on a scale needed to quell the pandemic, lower costs and ensure equal access. We join South Africa, India, and more than 100 countries to call for its immediate approval. Our lives are intertwined. Making COVID-19 vaccines accessible to all should be regarded as part of a race to save all of humanity. This is the humane and moral step to take without further delay.

The Omicron variant demonstrates again that we cannot defeat COVID-19 until people on every continent worldwide are vaccinated, and the virus can no longer readily adapt, mutate, and spread. Therefore, we must fulfill the goal of vaccinating 70 percent of the total global population by the end of next year. To do so, we urge members of the World Trade Organization to prioritize human lives over profits and take every step necessary to approve the TRIPS waiver to facilitate the mass production of vaccines globally. Additionally, we call urgent distribution of the new COVID-19 medication and other diagnostics tools worldwide. There is no reason to delay acting immediately. The cancellation of the WTO Ministerial due to the emergence of the Omicron variant should act as a clarion call to action

Almost two years after its emergence, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to rage, taking the lives of over five million people, straining human and material resources, and causing pain and suffering on every continent. COVID-19 is impervious to borders, wealth, or level of development. Ending the COVID-19 pandemic requires that we shun historical practices that marginalize low-income countries while giving access to high-income countries. Most nations where many citizens cannot access vaccines—including multiple countries in Africa, Asia and South America—are largely home to people of color. Rich nations that have vaccinated more than half of their populations should not rest easy until we as a global community are all equally protected. The hesitation to make the vaccine available impacts everyone. The failure to make vaccines accessible to all has already generated the Omicron and Delta variants making it impossible to sustain the gains made with vaccines. The current inflation taking place in countries such as the US is just one sign that the slow-paced response to COVID-19, including the refusal to share and transfer vaccine technology, is detrimental to the global economy

To save millions of lives and stop the unfolding economic catastrophe, we urge you to approve the TRIPS waiver which will allow more companies to manufacture life-saving vaccines globally. As a global faith community concerned about the health of vulnerable people worldwide, we support immediate approval of this temporary waiver as a life saving measure. We know that the few companies producing vaccines cannot manufacture enough vaccines in time to protect billions of people, but if we share the information required for production, more companies can be equipped to create vaccines that will reach more people. Vaccines donations alone will not end the pandemic.

We represent diverse faith communities with the shared value that the lives of all persons — young or old, all colors and genders, indigenous or migrant, laborer, or CEO — are equally beloved and that it is our responsibility to ensure the preservation and dignity of all equally. Furthermore, as people of faith, we believe it is our moral responsibility to save all lives and that such action is within your grasp.

Sincerely, the undersigned:

AbibiNsroma Foundation

ACT Alliance
All Africa Conference of Churches
Africa Faith and Justice Network
American Friends Services Committee, Africa Region
All Africa Conference of Churches
Alliance for Conflict Transformation (ACT)
Alliance of Baptists
American Friends Service Committee, US Office
Association of Concerned Africa Scholars (USA)
Awen Publications
BARNES FINDLEY FOUNDATION, INC
Braun's Casting
Calvary Baptist Church
Canadian Friends Service Committee (Quakers)
Center for Health and Hope
Center for Values in International Development
Centre Afrika
Child Way Uganda
Christian Aid
Christians for Social Action
Church of the Brethren, Office of Peacebuilding and Policy
Church Women United DC Unit
Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach
Comboni Missionaries
Comite Interreligioso de Honduras (CIH)
Common Spirit Health
Congregation de Notre Dame
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd
Conseil National des Religions pour la Paix/RDC
COREM- Council of Religions of Mozambique
Council of Religions for Peace in Mozambique

CRDT

Église du Christianisme Céleste de Côte d'Ivoire

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Executive Minister of Connected Engagement, Baltimore Washington Conference, The
United Methodist Church

Faith in Public Life

FEDERATION OF JAIN ASSOCIATIONS IN NORTH AMERICA - JAINA

Focsiv Italian federation christian organisations voluntary international service

Freedom Road, LLC

Friends in Solidarity, Inc. (with South Sudan)

Friends of Canon Gideon Foundation (FOCAGIFO)

Friends Revival Ministries

FWCC AS

Gandhi Development Trust

GHANA CONFERENCE OF RELIGIONS FOR PEACE (GCRP)

Ginter Park Presbyterian Church

Global Justice Institute of Metropolitan Community Churches

Hyattstown Christian Christian Church

Ibn Sina Academy of Medieval Medicine and Sciences

Indonesia for Global Justice

Interreligious Council of Albania

Islamic Centre of Myanmar

Islamic Society of North America (ISNA)

Islamic Supreme Council of Zambia

JAINA (Federation of Jain Associationsof North America)

Juba Foundation

Judson Memorial Church

Justice and Peace Team, Edgewood United Church, East Lansing, Michigan, USA

La Iglesia del Pueblo-Kairos Center

Lake Oconee Community Church

Le Regroupement pour la Responsabilité Sociale des Entreprises (RRSE)

Leadership Conference of Women Religious
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
Mennonite Central Committee U.S.
Mishkan Shalom
Muslim leader, Sacred Justice
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Council of Churches USA
National Religious Campaign Against Torture
NC Conference of the United Methodist Church
NIREC
North Carolina Council of Churches
Northwest Coalition for Responsible Investment
One More Percent
Pax Christi USA
Phoenix Settlement Trust
Plateforme de la Diaspora Tchadienne en Amerique (PDT-America)
Presbyterian Church (USA)
Ravensworth Baptist Church
Religion for Peace - Bénin
Religions for Peace Bangladesh
Religions for Peace Pakistan
Religions for Peace Philippines
Religions for Peace South Africa
Religions for Peace USA
Religions For Peace-South Africa
RfP-UK
S Lipson Counseling
SCIAF (Caritas Scotland)
Self employed
Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth
Socially Responsible Investment Coalition

Sojourners

Sophia House

Tabernacle United Church

The Grail in the US

The Grail/Academy of Literacy

The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society

TOTAL TAX SERVICES

U.S. Catholic Mission Association

Uganda Friends Church

Uganda Friends Church

UGANDA FRIENDS CHURCH (QUAKERS)

United Church of Christ, Justice and Local Church Ministries

United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries

University Presbyterian Church

Uplifting women in East Africa

World Council of Churches