



**Statement by IndustriALL Global Pharmaceutical Unions' Network  
on  
universal access to COVID-19 vaccines, tests, treatments, therapies and drugs**

Guided by our [Political Statement on COVID-19](#) "Unity and Struggle for a just and better future" approved at the IndustriALL Global Union Executive Committee meeting on 17 June 2020,

Noting IndustriALL Global Union and IndustriAll European Trade Union's [appeal](#) for justice and solidarity in the fight against COVID-19 from 1 February 2021, calling on the pharmaceutical industry to put the public good and interests before profits, making medicines and vaccinations available for everyone,

Backing the civil society [letter](#) signed by a number of trade unions, including IndustriALL, and civil society organizations, supporting a temporary waiver of World Trade Organization (WTO) intellectual property rules during the COVID-19 pandemic, as proposed by South Africa and India and supported by more than 100 WTO member states,

Endorsing the WHO's [campaign](#), supported by IndustriALL, for #VaccinEquity which aims to overcome the pandemic and the inequalities that lie at the root of so many global health challenges,

Noting that the pandemic is more severe than ever; it is more transmissible, more deadly, and there is human fatigue. The lack of supply and inequitable distribution of vaccines remains the biggest threat to ending the acute stage of this pandemic and driving a global recovery,

Recognizing the exceptional effort made by the pharmaceutical industry and all its employees around the world in responding to the pandemic, developing and rolling out vaccines within a very short space of time,

Taking into account the high importance given to intellectual property by the pharmaceuticals industry, under the principle that it protects incentives for innovation, we argue that the pandemic is an exceptional circumstance and requires exceptional measures,

Noting that since the beginning of the vaccine roll-out, the majority of all vaccines administered have been concentrated in high-income countries, while low-income countries still lag behind in gaining access to COVID-19 vaccines, global cooperation is crucial to achieve equitable access globally to tests, treatments, and COVID-19 vaccines,

Believing that every effort must be made to deliver vaccines to developing countries with a balance so as not to inhibit innovation,

At its virtual meeting on 25 May 2021, IndustriALL Global Pharmaceutical Unions' Network comprising the affiliates representing employees in the sector throughout the world:

- Expresses serious concern over the disparity between developing countries and developed countries in terms of equitable access and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, tests, treatments, therapies, and drugs;
- Expresses that we, as representatives of pharmaceutical workers in over 27 countries, are willing to contribute to the global effort to increase production of vaccines, medicines, tests, and treatments related to COVID-19 to help guarantee universal access to these products;
- Joins the calls to use all possible ways, including temporary removal of barriers towards the development, production and approval of vaccines, treatments and diagnostics, and other medical technologies, so that more manufacturers may contribute to the global supply;
- Calls on governments and vaccine manufacturers to support COVAX and the ACT Accelerator to equitably distribute vaccines, treatments and diagnostics globally without inhibiting innovation, as well as to boldly pursue initiatives, including the sharing of technology, -particularly mRNA vaccine technology using the WHO's mRNA technology transfer hub- to develop manufacturing capacity in many countries;
- Calls upon all vaccine-producing countries to allow exports and to avoid measures that disrupt supply chains;
- Underlines the importance of protecting the integrity and quality of the vaccines once restrictions are temporarily relaxed;
- Demands a common commitment by countries to not hoard or stockpile large numbers of vaccine doses;
- Calls on governments to recognize the protection of the health and safety of workers as a fundamental right and demands that COVID-19 be recognized as an occupational disease.
- Demands protection of existing manufacturing jobs, and workers' rights in the countries that are already producing vaccines and underlines the importance of consultation with unions and workers in the pharmaceutical industry throughout the decision making process.