

Nobel laureates call for waiving of IP Covid-19 rules

Over 140 former leaders and Nobel laureates have called for a waiving of intellectual property rules for Covid-19 vaccines and transferring vaccine technologies.



Source: [@geckophotos 123rf](#)

The call was made to the next German chancellor Annalena Baerbock, Olaf Scholz, and Armin Laschet, urging the three candidates to support a wide and comprehensive waiver of the TRIPS intellectual property agreement on all Covid-19-related technologies at the WTO, and join over 100 countries including the US and France in doing so, and "to make these the policies of any future coalition government".

Germany continues to oppose a waiver of the trade-related aspects of intellectual property (TRIPS) agreement for Covid-19 vaccines and treatments at the WTO.

First proposed by India and South Africa in October 2020, a waiver is now supported by more than 100 nations, with France and the United States announcing their support earlier this year.

The signatories say that ending German opposition to waiving patents is vital to overcoming vaccine monopolies, transferring vaccine technology and scaling up vaccine manufacturing around the world to prevent millions more deaths from Covid-19.

They are “deeply concerned with Germany’s continued opposition to a temporary waiver of the World Trade Organisation’s (WTO) intellectual property rules”, at a time in which “the artificial restriction on manufacturing and supply is leading to thousands of unnecessary deaths from COVID-19 each day”.

Vaccine inequality

Less than two percent of adults are fully vaccinated in low-income countries compared to almost 50% cent in high-income countries.

The letter emphasises that “Having helped create the most successful vaccine technology against Covid-19, by overcoming pharmaceutical monopolies and insisting that the technology be shared, Germany has the ability to help end this pandemic”.

The letter, which was coordinated by the People’s Vaccine Alliance, a coalition of more than 70 organisations including Club de Madrid, Oxfam and UNAIDS.

It warns that extreme vaccine inequity is bound to last as long as there will be no remarkable increase in vaccine production, while high-income countries are now starting to offer their citizens booster shots.

The global supply falls far short of the levels needed to provide global vaccination coverage.

In addition to supporting the waiver, they call on the next Chancellor to ensure that German pharmaceutical companies openly and rapidly share life-saving mRNA vaccine technology with qualified producers around the world.

World leaders

African leaders who signed the letter include Olusegun Obasanjo - former President of Nigeria, Joyce Banda - former President of Malawi, and Mehdi Jomaa - former Prime Minister of Tunisia.

Nobel laureates include Leymah Roberta Gbowee from Liberia, Denis Mukwege from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and JM Coetzee from South Africa.

They join former leaders including Gordon Brown, former UK Prime Minister; Francois Hollande, former President of France; Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland; Shaukat Aziz, former Prime Minister of Pakistan; and Helen Clark, former Prime Minister of New Zealand.

As the heads of state and government and Nobel Laureates write to the candidates for Chancellors, activists around the world have organised protests to demand the German government to stop blocking efforts to vaccinate the world.

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