



December 16, 2020

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada  
The Honourable Mary Ng, Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade  
The Honourable Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry  
The Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Health  
The Honourable Karina Gould, Minister of International Development

**Re: Canada, COVID-19, and Development Countries**

Dear Prime Minister and Ministers:

We are writing to express our sincere appreciation for the December 14 announcement of two new contributions to assist developing countries to deal with COVID-19: \$230 million to UNICEF to procure antibody therapeutics, and an additional \$255 million to the ACT Accelerator.

Earlier, more than 100 researchers, health professionals, and leaders in global health collectively expressed concern over Canada's 'vaccine nationalism' in making numerous bilateral purchase agreements with vaccine manufacturers. We urged Canada to contribute dollar-for-dollar to the COVAX AMC facility to procure vaccines for eligible low- and middle-income countries.<sup>1</sup> The December 14 announcement of new Access to COVID 19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator funding for the diagnostics, therapeutics and health systems/delivery pillars brings Canada's total contribution to the ACT Accelerator to \$865 million, including the \$230 million going directly to UNICEF. This brings Canada to the top tier of countries supporting the ACT Accelerator.

We are also encouraged by reports in November further suggested that your government may donate surplus vaccines to the COVAX AMC facility. We assume this will be enacted as new vaccines for which Canada has an advanced purchase agreement are approved. A public statement confirming this would be welcomed.

Canada is emerging as a steady voice for equity and human rights on the global stage, and we are proud and happy to see these steps toward action.

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<sup>1</sup> CCGHR-CSIH statements:

- <https://www.ccghr.ca/joint-ccgchr-csih-statement-call-action-defeating-covid-19-calls-global-solidarity-vaccine-power-play/>
- <https://www.ccghr.ca/improving-equitable-access-intellectual-property-waiver-covid-19-products-technologies-deserves-global-support/>

We continue to call upon Canada to reconsider their support for the WTO proposal for a “Waiver from certain provisions of the TRIPS Agreement for the prevention, containment and treatment of COVID-19.” In recognition of the unique global emergency posed by the current pandemic, the waiver affirms the importance of intellectual property rights while allowing exceptions for a limited time only exclusively for COVID-19 products. The waiver is supported by the WHO because it is legitimate and required for protection of public health. We believe that the proposed waiver is something that Canada should support, or at least not vote against if the proposal goes to a vote at the WTO General Council in a few days time.

For now, we warmly commend your government for its recent increase in support for the ACT Accelerator. These actions demonstrate that Canada is indeed showing international leadership in promoting global health equity.

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