

29 September 2020

Dear pharmaceutical industry leaders,

As individuals from around the world who have survived COVID-19, bereaved relatives and people at increased risk from this virus, we are writing to you to enlist your support for a People's Vaccine. In this unparalleled global pandemic, we can only ensure COVID-19 vaccines and treatments reach everyone who needs them by preventing monopolies, ramping up production and sharing knowledge. Only this will make them a global common good. As leaders of the industry that is developing and preparing to manufacture vaccines, your cooperation in this life-saving endeavour is crucial.

Some of us have lost loved ones to this killer disease. Some of us have come close to death ourselves. Some of us are continuing to live in fear that contracting this disease would be fatal for us. We see no justification why your profit or monopolies should mean anyone else should go through this. Many of us do not live in wealthy countries that have secured preferential access to vaccine candidates - we know we would likely be at the back of any queue.

We have seen this virus spread across the world at a terrifying speed. Our best chance of all staying safe is to ensure everyone who needs a COVID-19 vaccine gets one. This will only be possible if corporations like yours share knowledge so that a vaccine can be produced in vast quantities by as many manufacturers as possible. No single corporation will be able to make enough vaccine quickly enough to ensure it is available for all who need it. We need a People's Vaccine - not a profit vaccine.

Instead, pharmaceutical corporations, such as yours, are carrying on with business as usual - defending monopolies while refusing to share research and know-how. These barriers restrict production and drive up prices, leaving us all in danger. As long as solutions are kept under lock and key, there won't be enough to go around.

Taxpayers will not forget the billions of dollars that governments have invested in your companies to trial and roll out the medicines and vaccines that can save lives and end lockdowns. This public money should lead to vaccines that are available for all - not for creating monopolies or maximising profits.

Prior to the pandemic, many of us already suffered ill health and saw friends die as the profits of pharmaceutical corporations have meant vital medicines for illnesses like HIV or cancer are priced far out of reach. This unprecedented global emergency offers us a unique opportunity to explore other ways of funding, pricing and sharing medical research to improve patient access.

One way you can act is to immediately license vaccine technology and intellectual property rights to the WHO COVID-19 Technology Access Pool, which acts as an one-stop shop for companies to obtain licenses to produce the vaccines without having to negotiate separate deals with multiple patent or technology holders. The Pool can license production to companies, including in developing countries, that are able to manufacture the vaccine.

In the same way you would do all you can to ensure your mother, brother or daughter gets access to an effective COVID-19 vaccine or treatment, we ask that you take all possible actions to ensure no-one need live in fear of this terrible disease.

We look forward to hearing your response.

*[List of signatories available on request]*