Doctors and Scientists request an urgent meeting concerning vaccine inequity

Dear Taoiseach,

We are writing to you as members of the medical and scientific community in Ireland requesting a meeting to discuss the issues and solutions around global COVID-19 vaccine inequity. Recent news of the Omicron variant has further highlighted the urgency of this issue, as leaving large swathes of people unvaccinated across the world increases the amount of global circulating virus, increases opportunities for new variants to emerge and increases rates of transmission.

For many low-income countries, particularly those in Africa, vaccination rates hover around 2-3% due to lack of access to vaccines. Urgently ramping up vaccine supply in these regions will strengthen global health security, helping us to bring the pandemic to an end for everyone including the people of Ireland. In order to quickly and effectively support global vaccination, we recommend that the Irish government should fully endorse WHO recommendations and adopt four main actions.

1. Support the TRIPS waiver to allow low and middle income countries to produce their own vaccines, so that they are not dependent on donations from higher income countries.
2. Ensure vaccine makers facilitate open sharing of know-how and tech transfer to all relevant vaccine producers in order to increase vaccine production in other countries. This should be done through the World Health Organisation (WHO) COVID Technology Access Pool (C-TAP)
3. Facilitate urgent global redistribution of current vaccine supplies and commit to rational purchasing for Ireland to avoid vaccine hoarding and wastage
4. Ensure that any strategy for booster vaccines is evidence-based and ethical, within a global context
We appreciate these are very challenging times and that, as Taoiseach, you are leading Ireland through an unparalleled health, economic and education crisis. However, combining our history of philanthropy and health care education with our current expertise in biotechnology, immunology and pharmaceutical manufacture, Ireland is in a unique position to provide leadership in driving Vaccine Equity across the globe. We urge you to demonstrate the leadership that Ireland could be providing to the world. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and government officials to present the compelling case for why government action on vaccine inequity is not just a moral responsibility but also a public health imperative which will be key to bringing this pandemic to an end.

Sincerely,

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