

VACCINE APARTHEID

VACCINE ACCESS INEQUALITY
AND LONG COVID

One-pager

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**A life is a life is a life,
and the ones most
in need are the ones
first to be served.**

ISSUE AT STAKE

→ The Covid-19 pandemics offered a great opportunity for the Global community to practice international solidarity. But the opportunity was missed, the multi-national institutions have failed to ensure equitable vaccine access. The prevailing “My-interest-first” policies have reduced the overall efficacy of the vaccination campaign and damaged the trust in global solidarity. International health policy needs a shift to humanity.

WHY IT MATTERS

→ By end of February 2022, Africa has fully vaccinated 176 million people, just 13% of its population. This makes the continent the laggard No. 1 in the global Covid-19 vaccination campaign: At the same time, all other continents have already vaccinated more than 50% of their population. The reason was not a lack of demand, but of vaccine supply. Low-income countries, most of which are in Africa, have received just 0.6 percent of the first 8 billion shots that have been administered in the Covid-19 campaign, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). The overwhelming majority of vaccine doses delivered by the US vaccine makers Moderna, Pfizer, and J&J, have gone to high-income countries. Pledges to redistribute vaccine doses from North to South, while welcome, were not enough.

High-income governments had collectively pledged to donate 1.8 billion vaccine doses, but by February 2022, less than 30 percent had been delivered. The Omicron Variant, first sequenced and identified in South Africa late in 2021, showed the global disadvantage of narrow-minded national vaccination policies. President Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa stated: “The emergence of the Omicron variant should be a wake-up call to the world that vaccine inequality cannot be allowed to continue. Until everyone is vaccinated, everyone will continue to be at risk.” The World Trade Organization (WTO) attempts to secure a waiver on intellectual property rights so that countries such as South Africa can produce their jabs are backed by the US but opposed by the EU, the UK, and Switzerland. The argument in favor of donating more vaccines or waiving intellectual property rights remains the same as it has been since the start of the pandemic: the right thing to do is also the self-interested thing to do.

CALL TO ACTION

→ There are two keys to maximise the impact of a vaccination campaign: **1. Scale:** Mass production of as many doses as fast as possible. **2. Reach:** Distribution of the doses to the people most in need. For scale, the transfer of the mRNA technology is particularly important for global health now and for future pandemic preparedness.

Studies indicate that 120 facilities worldwide, including some in poorer countries, could produce mRNA vaccines if the pharmaceutical companies transferred their technology to relevant WHO technology sharing hubs. This would help create a conducive environment for additional vaccine manufacturers in low-and-middle-income countries. A patent protection that slows the speed of vaccine production reduces the impact on humanity. So FII Institute urges the global community to collaborate to ensure the swift adoption of a TRIPS waiver at the WTO covering vaccines and other health products. For reach, the Covid-19 vaccination campaign has shown hundreds of good examples: In every country, rules were made to ensure that more vulnerable groups of the population get prioritized access to vaccine doses. This bias pro life and pro humanity is the heart of every national health policy. It should be the heart of a global health policy, too. A life is a life is a life, and the ones most in need are the ones first to be served. Making the world fit for pandemics doesn’t need more donations and charity, it needs an end of vaccine apartheid.

ABOUT FII INSTITUTE

→ FII INSTITUTE is a new global nonprofit foundation that has an investment arm and one agenda: Impact on Humanity. Global, inclusive and committed to Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) principles, we foster great minds from around the world and turn ideas into real-world solutions in five critical areas: Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Robotics, Education, Healthcare and Sustainability. We are in the right place at the right time: when decision makers, investors and an engaged generation of youth come together in aspiration, energized and ready for change. We harness that energy into three pillars: THINK, XCHANGE, ACT. Our THINK pillar empowers the world's brightest minds to identify technological solutions to the most pressing issues facing humanity. Our XCHANGE pillar builds inclusive platforms for international dialogue, knowledge sharing and partnership. Our ACT pillar curates and invest directly in the technologies of the future to secure sustainable real-world solutions. Join us to own, co-create and actualize a brighter, more sustainable future for humanity.

→ This Thought Piece was produced by the THINK Pillar at the FII Institute. In THINK we believe that “By integrating what is desirable from a human point of view with what is technologically feasible and economically viable, we can create the solutions for a better world” At the FII Institute, our mission is to empower the brightest minds for all, with all to create a positive global community for all. This is the heart of THINKs strategy in that we do this, through building a global momentum to impact change, working with esteemed partners and building our thought leadership to ensure that we focus on impacting humanity positively.

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