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Public Health Association
AUSTRALIA



MEDIA RELEASE

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Midday protest calls on Pfizer to share vaccine knowledge and enable increased global production ahead of World Trade meetings on vaccine monopolies

An alliance of health, human rights and fair-trade organisations have today joined forces to rally at 12 pm outside Pfizer Australia's office at 151 Clarence St, Sydney.

They are calling for the pharmaceuticals giant to put the Covid-19 vaccination needs of millions of people in low and lower-middle income countries ahead of its own revenue targets.

The protesters are asking Pfizer, which recently announced revenue forecasts of US\$36 billion from Covid-19 vaccine sales this year, to share their vaccine knowledge and to stop lobbying against changes to World Trade Organisation intellectual property rules that would allow low and lower-middle income countries to ramp-up production of Covid-19 vaccines and treatments.

The protest comes as advocates around the world call for urgent international action ahead of a **World Trade Organization Ministerial Meeting on November 29**, where a temporary waiver on vaccine monopolies will be decided.

In July, a task force led by the World Health Organization, World Trade Organization, World Bank and International Monetary Fund set a clear target to vaccinate 40% of people in every low and lower-middle income country by the end of 2021, to protect them from Covid-19. Yet, with less than 50 days until the end of the year, the African continent is at a vaccination rate of less than 10%. In some countries, it's less than 1%. Less than 10% of Pfizer's available doses have been sold to low and lower-middle income countries.

Ry Atkinson, Strategic Campaigns Associate for Amnesty International Australia, said: "Ensuring vaccine access for as many people as possible as quickly as possible, is the most effective route out of this human rights health crisis. The handful of companies that successfully developed Covid-19 vaccines should be heroes. Instead, companies like Pfizer

have played a decisive role in limiting global vaccine production and obstructing fair access to a life-saving health product. Pfizer has monopolised intellectual property, blocked technology transfers, and lobbied aggressively against measures that would expand the global manufacturing of Covid-19 vaccines, while selling their available doses almost exclusively to wealthy countries.”

Dr Patricia Ranald, Convener of the Australian Fair Trade and Investment Network (AFTINET) said: “It’s time to say no to Pfizer’s profiteering. Pfizer has refused to share its knowledge to enable more vaccines to be produced in developing countries and is playing a [leading role](#) in lobbying against a temporary waiver of WTO rules which would enable such sharing. We call on Pfizer to stop lobbying against the waiver and to share its knowledge to save millions of lives.”

Jennifer Tierney, Executive Director of Médecins Sans Frontières Australia, said: 'I’m personally feeling gutted that over and over again the global community has had the chance to come together and fight this crisis and has declined to do so, leaving millions of people in the developing world to die. I’d like somebody to restore my faith in humanity and open up the opportunity for equal access to vaccines and treatments.”

Lyn Morgain, Chief Executive Oxfam Australia, said: "The only way to end this pandemic is to ensure everyone everywhere has access to a vaccine. Pfizer's ongoing prioritisation of profits over global health is unethical. Pfizer must share its technology and know-how with other qualified manufacturers so that everyone, everywhere can have access to these life saving vaccines.”

Kate Lee, Executive Officer, Union Aid Abroad - APHEDA, said: “In Africa, less than 7% of the population are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 with some countries less than 1%. It’s obscene that in a global pandemic and on top of mega profits from the public investment they received to develop the COVID vaccines. Pfizer and other big drug companies are refusing to even temporarily forgo their patent rights on these drugs. A proposed TRIPS Waiver on patents will enable faster production and access of these life-saving vaccines and other products for the global south. We demand the WTO approve a TRIPS Waiver on COVID-19 vaccines this month and demand Pfizer stop lobbying against such an action.”

Contacts

AFTINET Dr Patricia Ranald Convener	0419 695 841
Amnesty International, Media	0423 552 208
Oxfam Australia CEO Lyn Morgain, Media Lily Partland	0418 118 687
Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA, Executive Officer, Kate Lee	0420 293 083