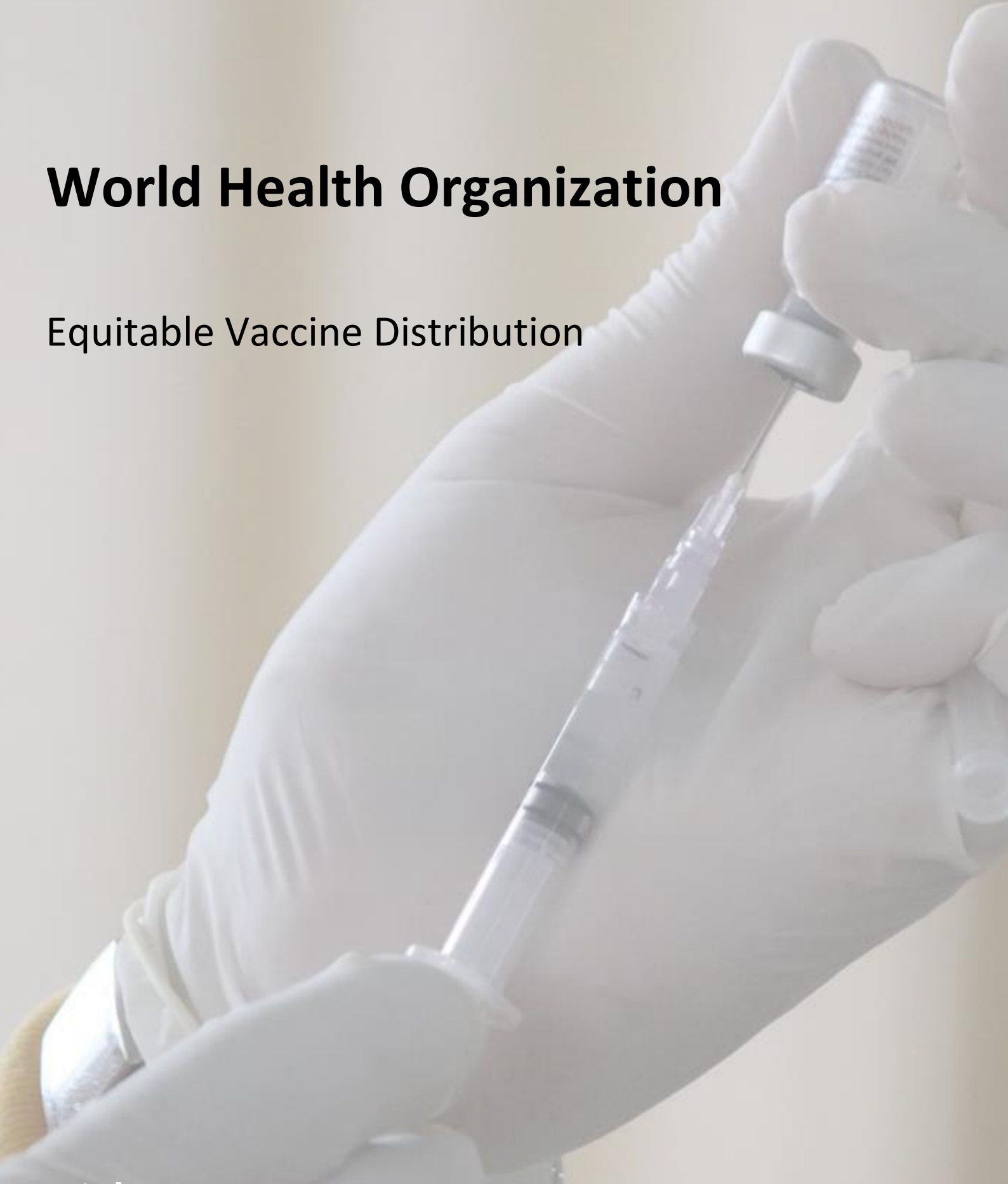


# World Health Organization

## Equitable Vaccine Distribution



<b>Forum</b>	World Health Organization
<b>Issue:</b>	Equitable Vaccine Distribution
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## Introduction

Vaccines are known to be an essential part in the process of solving any issues regarding sicknesses. Many parts of the population get vaccinated in order to prevent certain infections, and vaccines were an essential part in slowing down the most recent Covid-19 Pandemic. As of June 2022, it is approximated that over 60% of the world's population has been vaccinated for Covid-19, equating to 12 billion doses given out.

However due to the many different types and qualities of vaccines varying, and the limited scope provided in a certain period of time, competition usually arises between certain nations to obtain the most amount of best quality vaccines to provide to their citizens. In some cases, countries with enough fundings will attempt to secure more vaccines compared to the number of people who will receive it, as they would be investing in the creation of the vaccines before they are fully approved and ready for this usage. This case was demonstrated heavily during the few most recent pandemics by more economically developed countries (MEDC), when large nations invested large sums of money to companies who were creating the vaccines for a certain number of vaccines if the vaccine were to get approved for usage.

Vaccine equity should advocate for global collaboration in order to let the whole population be healthy and stop any widespread diseases, instead of the rich nations being able to give out and decide on how much vaccines are given out.

## Definition of Key Terms

### Equitable

According to the Oxford Dictionary, Equitable means to be "fair and impartial".

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## Vaccination

The World Health Organization defines vaccination as the management of safe, antigenic elements that patients who have been injected can gain immunity against the specific infection or virus.

## Distribution

The Oxford dictionary defines distribution as the measure of giving out and sharing something between a certain number of beneficiaries.

## Bilateral Deals

A situation in which where a there is an agreement between two different parties.

## Unvaccinated

Someone who has not been vaccinated.

## Immunity

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention defines immunity as “protection against a disease”. Immunity can be proven through tests and antibodies inside the blood.

## Community Immunity

According to the CDC Vaccines & Immunizations Glossary, Community Immunity is when the majority of the population has developed immunity to a virus, meaning that the spread of the infection will not be less likely to happen at a wide scale.

## mRNA

Standing for messenger RNA: messenger ribonucleic acid (a molecule)

mRNA vaccines are the type of vaccines most typically being created and used to prevent the Covid-19 Virus. They help to create immunity by letting the immune system recognize the infection and treat it before it worsens.

## Variant

A somewhat different type or form of a substance.



## Booster shots

Another dose of the vaccination given after the original dose as an additional enhancer. Booster shots can be given more than once as well.

## General Overview

Vaccine inequities are most prevalent during the most recent pandemics when bilateral deals started to come in place of the vaccine market.

### Vaccine inequity demonstrated in the coronavirus pandemic

In the case of the most recent Covid-19 pandemic, many economically advantaged nations made deals with various vaccine companies that seemed to be on their way to be getting their vaccines approved. For example, the United States funded the company AstraZeneca \$1.2 Billion for research on their vaccines in 2020, in exchange for 300 million doses if the vaccine were to be approved for safety trials.

These fundings from a variety of nations helped to speed up the research process for vaccine creations, making the vaccines one of the fastest types to get approved in the history of vaccines. However, these big fundings made some nations that could not participate in these investments unable to receive substantial number of doses within an adequate amount of time. For instance, by January 2021 – before the release and approval, or even production started, 96% of Pfizer – BioNTech, and 100% of Moderna vaccines were already sold. At this time, countries making up only approximately 16% of the population had bought over half the vaccine doses from the companies most likely to have vaccines that were approved for usage.

In March 2021, Canada had secured around 300 million vaccination doses. Compared to the population of the nation, 38 million in 2020, this was enough to cover the population seven to eight times. At the same time, the United States had acquired enough vaccinations to cover the entire population of the nation three times.

When nations that had secured enough vaccine doses started to hand out vaccinations to its citizens, countries that were not able to, such as India and Brazil were experiencing the peak of the pandemic. This demonstration of vaccine inequity would make the pandemic last even longer



globally, allow cases to skyrocket in countries that do not have vaccines, and give time for new variants to arise, which will require a new type of vaccine or an extra dose.

Vaccine inequity is not a new problem the world is facing, especially in the case of pandemics. In 2009, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared swine flu as a pandemic. At this time, nations such as Switzerland, Brazil, Italy, Norway, the United States of America, Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, and France secured vaccines through independent deals with Pharmaceutical Companies. The nations then promised to donate around one hundred and twenty million doses to the World Health Organization to be passed on to lower income countries that were struggling to secure enough vaccines to cover their own populations. However, the corresponding nation's only started to donate their promises to the WHO after it was found that the pandemic was not as serious. This can be compared to the technological industry's situation, where the most recently developed technology can take decades to arrive and be used in poor countries.

Other than specific and special situations such as global pandemics, nations with not as much funding and political power also experience vaccine inequity when it comes to all types of vaccines and circumstances.

The main issue with vaccine inequity in the market is the system of the vaccine market. The market starts from the pharmaceutical companies, manufacturing companies, before moving on to the actual distribution of the vaccine doses. The queue for the vaccinations start from the beginning – with the companies paying pharmaceutical companies to reserve doses for them. Pharmaceutical companies usually accept this money in order to have more funds that will speed up the research, and therefore approval process. Nations that queue from the pharmaceutical companies are usually the most powerful and rich as they can handle possible losses if the vaccines do not get through approval, and is also the reason for many nations investing and making deals with a variety of companies that seem reliable to them. Nations also queue in the manufacturing companies through more bilateral deals. By the time vaccines start to become distributed after approval and safety tests, most of the doses have already been sold to these big nations. For example, Peru's bilateral deal with Astrazeneca arrived months after vaccinations had started being given out to citizens in the United States.



## Major Parties Involved

### World Health Organization

The world health organization manages the vaccination and immunization of different infections, diseases, and to different pandemics on a global scale. The WHO is also involved in many efforts to provide vaccines equally to the whole population and to nations that are specifically low-income.

### COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX):

System and organization to manage vaccination buying deals with companies, as well as provide vaccines to low income nations that are not able to have their own funds to receive enough vaccination doses.

### Pharmaceutical Companies:

Pharmaceutical companies are the most essential part of the process – the creators of the vaccines.

### More Economically Developed Countries:

More economically developed nations are the countries that make the most deals, fund the most research but also secure the most vaccinations – sometimes excessively more than the countries population.

### The Vaccine Alliance (Gavi):

Global health management team that works to provide poor countries with an opportunity for immunization.

## Timeline of Key Events

Date	Description of event
1798-1804	The first vaccine was developed by Edward Jenner. This vaccine was targeted to curing



	and helping to prevent the spread of Smallpox.
1879	Louis Pasteur creates the first bacterial vaccine, the chicken cholera.
1980	Smallpox was officially eradicated.
2009-2010	Swine Flu – a global flu outbreak that became a pandemic
August 2010	The World Health Organization declares an end to the Influenza pandemic.
February 2020	The Centers for Disease Control and the World Health Organization declares the Coronavirus a public health emergency.
December 2020	The United States Food and Drug Administration issues Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for Pfizer and Moderna, which are Covid-19 vaccines.

## UN involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

- World Medical Association Resolution on the Equitable Global Distribution of Covid-19 Vaccine
- United Nations Security Council Resolution on the Equitable Distribution of the COVID-19 Vaccine, 26<sup>th</sup> February 2021 (Resolution 2565)
- Resolution on Strengthening Documentation within the Human Rights Council, (A/HRC/47/L.28/Rev.1)
- Resolution on the Enhancement of International Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights (A/HRC/47/L.10/Rev.1)
- Ensuring equitable, affordable, timely and universal access for all countries to vaccines in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic (A/C.3/76/L.55/Rev.1)

## Previous Attempts to solve the Issue



COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) was a program created by the Global Health Group, Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), World Health Organization, and The Vaccine Alliance (Gavi) to provide vaccines to 92 middle to low income nations that could not make their own deals. It can be compared to Paris Climate Agreement of the vaccine industry. COVAX first allowed high income countries to buy and make deals with multiple vaccine companies at one time, as COVAX was created during the pandemic and could not stop the already made deals. COVAX used their financials (donated by nations and charities) to fund several different vaccine companies in order to lower risks of having many losses from the failed and unapproved vaccinations compared to bilateral deals. COVAX used its purchasing power to make deals with manufacturers on a huge scale, which would lower the cost of vaccines and let COVAX provide and buy vaccines for lower income countries.

On the other hand, the main issue with COVAX was the ongoing bilateral deals. As a big organization requires all countries to use its system, it was not efficient to expect the big nations, who already had it's own deals to secure its own vaccine supplies, there was no benefit for nations to join COVAX.

There have been tracking systems such as Esri that provide mapping and analytics of vaccine distributions, which may help to hold companies and nations accountable to distribute vaccine doses equally.

## Possible Solutions

A program that is designed to work as a middleman between nations and drug companies but are able to work effectively within all timings of global emergencies such as pandemics (when nations first start to buy vaccines to the end of the sales). The system of COVAX could be referred to for modification as well.

A treaty or international law to prevent nations for being able to secure more than a certain amount of vaccination doses in the case of an international emergency, and keep a certain percentage of the market free for sales to nations that are not able to secure doses beforehand.





Regulating the timings for which companies are able to start investing and making deals with pharmaceutical companies. However, it would be important to think of an alternative technique to help companies to fund research to create the vaccines in a more efficient way.

A system of nations that are currently in dispute or a territory of another nations to be able to receive its own doses, or requiring the providing of vaccine doses to a nation with territories to ensure the safety of all citizens.

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