



49th Regular Session of the Human Rights Council, 28 February – 1 April 2022

Item 3: Panel on ensuring equitable, affordable, timely and universal access for all countries to vaccines in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (res. 46/14)

Oral statement delivered by: Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG23)

“Health is a right and vaccines are a public good!”

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APG23 thanks the Human Rights Council for convening this panel discussion on Access to COVID-19 Vaccine.

We all believe, at least on words, in the right to health of every human being and yet many people have been left without COVID-19 vaccines, worryingly including many front-line health workers.

The High Commissioner emphasized that the pandemic has highlighted the importance to integrate human rights-based approaches into health emergency preparedness, response and recovery efforts.¹ How will governments translate this needed integration into real actions? How will we see it reflected in the negotiations of a future instrument to strengthen pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response?

APG23 believes that the so-called pandemic treaty should necessarily tackle the issue of vaccine equity, not only with words pledging for donations or cooperation that rely on the good heart of the powerful, but with solutions embodying the human rights approach at their core. In case of health emergencies, the Intellectual Property Rights must be waived because it is a matter of human lives.

Health is a public good and not a private commodity. Health is a human right. We cannot consider vaccines to be a free market commodity. There is a need for new kinds of multilateralism and decision-making processes that favour the voice of the poorer countries.

Global health needs a global commitment to international solidarity, international cooperation and sustainable development, with solutions that put humanity first instead of competition, power and profit. These have already caused enough deaths, disparities and inequalities with consequences that will be difficult to face for the generations to come.

We would like to ask the panellist to share their opinion on the possible beneficial impact of the convention on the Right to Development under discussion at the UN, on the fulfilment of the right to health for all peoples and in particular regarding the issue of vaccines accessibility and Intellectual Property Rights. Thank you!

¹ From the Concept note (draft as of 13 February 2022)