

SOCIAL FORUM  
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Room XVII, *Palais des Nations*, Geneva, Switzerland  
“GOOD PRACTICES, SUCCESS STORIES, LESSONS LEARNED AND  
CHALLENGES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC,  
WITH A SPECIAL FOCUS ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND SOLIDARITY, AND  
FROM A HUMAN RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE”

**Interactive Dialogue on COVID-19 and Economic Social and Cultural Rights**

Joint Oral statement delivered by: Associazione Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG23) on behalf of:

*Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII (APG23)*

*MaterCare International,*

*International Federation of Catholic Medical Associations / Fédération Internationale des Associations Médicales Catholiques (F.I.A.M.C.),*

*CERTA – Centro de Estudos e Recursos Teologia do Amor*

APG23 and the co-signing NGOs would like to contribute with some reflections.

Health is a complex matter. It is not just the mere absence of disease. Instead, it is greatly defined by its social determinants as all those non-medical factors influencing health outcomes. These entail people’s economic, social and cultural rights as necessary features and fundamental human rights. Among these necessary assets, food, water and sanitation (just to name a few), are core elements to the sustainment of human well-being and healthy lives. In times of pandemic, this complexity should be tackled with real actions initiating a radical change inverting the trends from the aim of profit to the one of well-being, from a greedy run for accumulation to an attitude of resource-sharing, from a model of protection to one of communion.

According to recent data, globally, 6.31 billion doses of vaccines have been administered so far and yet, only 2.3 % of people in low-income countries have received one dose.<sup>1</sup> Clearly, some questions raise spontaneously. Considering such inequity, what are we really waiting for to waive the obstacles to facilitate vaccines production and distribution worldwide?

As the WHO General Director Dr. Tedros has affirmed, we are experiencing a worldwide ‘vaccine apartheid’<sup>2</sup> selecting and confining some people and communities to the fundamental access to COVID-19 vaccines. In fact, by bending under the pressure of distorted economic mechanisms that will sooner or later reverse the bill of their inequity onto the whole world, humanity has miserably failed the mission of being a human family. As we are facing the worst humanitarian and medical emergency of recent history, we are seeing extra-profit on one side, and death and desolation on the other.

Declamations of charity actions do not last and are not enough. What we need is a completely new approach to the understanding of the health of people and the planet. We need a new approach that places international solidarity as preventive solidarity, reactive solidarity, and international cooperation at its core, not just for charity but for justice.

What we really need is what Pope Francis called: “a new and generous spirit to abandon our individualism and promote the common good: a spirit of justice that mobilises us to ensure universal

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ourworldindata.org/covid-vaccinations> (accessed 03/10/2021)

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Tedros, WHO, may, 2021 retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/world-has-entered-stage-vaccine-apartheid-who-head-2021-05-17/>

access to vaccines and the temporary suspension of intellectual property rights; a spirit of communion that allows us to generate a different, more inclusive, just and sustainable economic model.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/pont-messages/2021/documents/papa-francesco\\_20210508\\_videomessaggio-vaxlive.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/pont-messages/2021/documents/papa-francesco_20210508_videomessaggio-vaxlive.html)