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CI ORIENTATIONS ON COVID-19 VACCINES

Covid-19 has raised many challenges for humanity and has totally transformed our societies. Pope Francis said “humanity came together in solidarity to fight against the pandemic, and it is only together in solidarity that we can get out of this situation”.

At a time when vaccines are debated as vital means of protecting against the pandemic, Caritas Internationalis recalls the need for addressing the issue of vaccines not as a sheer commodity or economic issue. The recent emergence of new variants calls for immediate response to prevent the virus from spreading and mutating further, thus continuing to attack and steal more human lives.

Vaccines are to be considered as common property of humanity and must be made available for all with equity, justice and as a human right. The current situation must be addressed holistically, considering global healthcare, preventive care and accessibility at once. Prioritizing intellectual property rights over the human right to health and life for the sake of economic interests will be an unacceptable obstacle to achieving this goal, and will also be a source of discrimination. Preventive care must be considered as a human right and all people, wherever they are, must have access to vaccines.

This cannot be achieved without including the global South in the production of vaccines. There are laboratories and pharmaceutical production centers which possess the necessary scientific knowledge and must be given the possibility to produce these precious life-saving vaccines.

Caritas Internationalis, a Confederation of 162 Member Organizations based in 200 countries and territories in the world, requests the States Member of the World Trade Organization ahead of its General Assembly to:

- Ensure the quick transfer of knowledge through training and accompaniment to produce vaccines effectively and expeditiously.

Powerful actors such as the EU are called to lead by example: the EU should promote equitable vaccination not only for Europe, but also for people living in low- and middle-income countries by ensuring that also such countries can directly make vaccines available at an affordable price during 2021. The EU should unblock intellectual property obstacles at multilateral level by accepting to waive TRIPS

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¹ Agreement rules