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Covid-19 pandemic

G7: Vaccine apartheid maintained!

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According to the NGO Oxfam, at the current rate of progress, it will take 60 years for the poorest countries to sufficiently vaccinate their population against Covid-19. Only 2% of Africans have received at least one dose of vaccine, compared to more than 45% of the French, 61% of the British and nearly 64% of Americans. The price of this vaccine apartheid? More than 15,000 deaths per day officially recorded worldwide. In India alone, at the peak of the second wave, for several weeks, up to 4,000 people died every day. This sad toll brings the official death toll from covid to 3.8 million people, and two to three times that number, according to the WHO. Every day that goes by without lifting the vaccine apartheid is a crime against the people.

For the time being, in the race between vaccines and variants, whose dynamic to contaminate more and more is clear, vaccines remain globally very effective. But for how long? So there is an urgent need to vaccinate the world's population, the entire world population. And to do this, we need to increase production capacity, and therefore lift patents on vaccines [1], impose technology transfers, requisition production capacity, and turn our backs on the vaccine nationalism that has led to rich countries monopolising Big Pharma's vaccines at a high price, and that sometimes, as Macron was obliged to acknowledge, poor countries have to pay more than the European Union or the United States to buy a batch of vaccines in this context of global shortage!

Yet at the WTO TRIPS (Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) Committee meeting on 7-8 June, the EU, with the support of France and Germany, again blocked the proposal by India and South Africa to suspend patents. This did not prevent Macron, two days later, on 10 June, from declaring at a press conference, with violins in his voice: "We must commit ourselves at the WHO, at the WTO, to guarantee that intellectual property will never be an obstacle to vaccines (...) This is why we have decided to put on the table, with South Africa, a proposal that would make it possible to set up a derogation, limited in time and space, from this intellectual property. This proposal was dropped the very next day. Because at the G7 meeting in Cornwall, the world's leaders promised to give a billion doses of vaccine to poor countries. The problem is that there is no real timetable. And what is filtering through is worrying. Biden promised 200 million doses in 2021 and 300 million by June 2022. France has planned to send 30 million doses by the end of the year. And essentially Astra Zeneca, which the French have shunned and which is not very effective against the beta variant that has emerged in South Africa! This country had in fact stopped vaccinating with Astra Zeneca following the study by the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, which showed that the vaccine was only 22% effective against this variant!

Far too long, far too late, far too many deaths. Who would dare to boast to the opinion of rich countries about such a timetable for their own people! And what the peoples of the world are asking for is not charity from the rich countries, it is not to have the vaccines shunned by the rich countries, it is not a schedule that depends on the goodwill of the masters of the world, with announcement effects that are all too familiar. The requirement is that they themselves produce the vaccines they need. India, South Africa, Brazil and Thailand have production capacities. It is up to activists around the world to force the masters of the world to lift Big Pharma's patents so that vaccines can be produced everywhere at low cost, for immediate, free and universal access to vaccines that are common goods of humanity. To the unbearable speech of Seth Berkley, director of Gavi, which manages the Covax system, who dares to congratulate himself that the fund-raising of 2 June will make it possible to "protect nearly 30% of the population of low-income countries by the beginning of... 2022", let us show our solidarity in order to lift the patents. The next deadline is 17 June, at the informal meeting of the WTO TRIPS Council.

PS:

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[1] See the international petition "[End the system of private patents!](#)".