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To the attention of:
Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Stella Kyriakides
Commissioner for Crisis Management, Janez Lenarčič

CC:
DG SANTE Director-General, Sandra Gallina
DG ECHO Director-General, Paraskevi Michou

Brussels, 10 November 2020

Dear Commissioner Kyriakides,
Dear Commissioner Lenarčič,

Since January 2020, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) has responded to the global COVID-19¹ pandemic in the more than 70 countries in which MSF has existing medical projects. As we continue to monitor the pandemic unfold, we are concerned there will likely be an equity gap despite global efforts to develop national allocation systems for COVID-19 vaccines. Learning the hard lessons from the past, populations in crisis-affected humanitarian contexts including refugees, asylum seekers, marginalized populations and people living in conflict areas, are too often left behind and therefore will not benefit from the timely provision of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines. These are populations that invariably have the least access to or are excluded all together from national health services.

To this end, as you know, WHO is leading an interagency process to create a humanitarian stockpile of COVID vaccines and the required coordination mechanism to allocate and prioritise vaccine use for humanitarian contexts. However, it remains uncertain where and when the vaccine supply will be secured for this humanitarian stockpile.

We are asking **EU Governments and the European Commission to support the efforts to ensure there is an earmarked allocation of COVID-19 vaccines for humanitarian contexts.** This would be an essential step in the direction to honour the EU's announced commitments to universal access to COVID-19 vaccines.²

¹ MSF. Report: Responding to COVID-19: Global Accountability Report – March to May 2020. [Online]. 10 Aug 2020. [Cited on 29 Oct 2020]. Available from: <https://www.msf.org/msf-and-covid-19>

² Joint Statement by Charles Michel, President of the European Council; Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission; Giuseppe Conte, Prime Minister of Italy; Emmanuel Macron, President of France; Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany; Erna Solberg, Prime Minister of Norway. The global response: Working together to help the world get better. [Online] 03 May 2020. [Cited on 05 Nov 2020]. Available from: <https://www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2020/05/03/the-global-response-working-together-to-help-the-world-get-better.en>



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Through bilateral deals, the European Union has secured a notable portion of COVID-19 vaccines doses³, which may add up to 1.5 billion doses. **It is now essential to collectively commit to setting aside doses of the advanced purchased COVID-19 vaccines for humanitarian contexts, as and when they start being delivered.**

The set-aside vaccine doses should be channelled through a WHO led inter-agency mechanism to govern the allocation and prioritisation of vaccine use for humanitarian contexts. We believe this should be an independent mechanism, developed hand in hand with humanitarian implementing partners and allocation decisions should be based on public health criteria, articulated in the WHO Concept for fair access and equitable allocation of COVID-19 health products framework and the subsequent WHO SAGE Roadmap For Prioritizing Uses Of COVID-19 Vaccines.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss this request with you further, and look forward to your response. We have shared a similar letter with European governments.

Sincerely,

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³ European Commission. EU Vaccine Strategy. [Online] 2020. [Cited 29 Oct 2020]. Available from: https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/health/coronavirus-response/public-health_en