

## QUOTES and PHOTOS from the Press Conference “No Profit On Covid”

Tuesday, November 30, 2021 at 9:00 am

Café de l'Ariana, Rue de Montbrillant 83, 1202 Geneva, Switzerland

**PHOTOS:** Voici un lien vers les photos et vidéos de notre action de ce matin. Elles sont libres de droit. Vous pouvez les utiliser dans vos publications. Crédits: @teamreporters / Chris Heeney.

*Here is a link to the photos and videos of our action this morning. They are free of rights. You can use them in your publications. Credits: @teamreporters / Chris Heeney.*

<https://nov30noprofitoncovid.com/photos/>

**QUOTES:** The following are attributable quotes from Members of Parliament and Civil Society who spoke at the above press conference. Please contact Stefanie Prezioso at [sprezioso@infomaniak.ch](mailto:sprezioso@infomaniak.ch) for more information on contacting participants.

*Stefanie Prezioso (MP-Ensemble à Gauche-Switzerland)*

### **Deborah James (Our World is Not for Sale (OWINFS) global network)**

“The TRIPS waiver which is supported by global health community, well over 100 countries, numerous former heads of state and Nobel laureates, academics, researchers, the EU parliament, Members of the US Congress, as well as civil society organizations (CSOs), and Global Union federations (ITUC, PSI, and ITF) representing more than 200 million members around the world. It opposed only by a few governments in the WTO who are acting as clients of Big Pharmaceutical corporations. The WTO’s rules literally protect billionaire’s ability to become multi-billionaires on the backs of millions of people who are dying.

The WTO is fundamentally flawed. It should not be a “trade” organization that decides whether millions of people live or die during a pandemic. There were four other areas of negotiations in the WTO with advanced negotiations headed to a conclusion - domestic regulation, fisheries, agriculture, and a Ministerial Declaration - but the EU has not even allowed text-based negotiations to start on the one thing that will end the pandemic. That is why over 130 of us called for the Ministerial to be postponed last week. That’s why people are rallying this week in cities around the world to protest the #WTO’s lethal rule, as you can see from our global Call to Action. #Vaccine apartheidists have blood on their hands. And the WTO’s rules protect the murderers. TRIPS WAIVER NOW! Thank you to all the people around the world saying PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT!

Vaccine apartheid created the conditions under which this new Omicron variant was able to flourish. Now more than ever it is crystal clear: Vaccinating the world is the ONLY way to #end the pandemic. WTO get out of the way! We need WTO members to agree to remove WTO TRIPS rules, which are THE BIGGEST barrier to ending the pandemic now.” [djames@cepr.net](mailto:djames@cepr.net)

### **Caroline Lukas (MP Green Party - Great Britain)**

“By blocking the demand of so many Global South countries for a TRIPS waiver, the British Government is not only condemning huge numbers of people to illness and death, but also undermining its own Covid response in the UK. Instead of siding with the interests of big Pharma, we need our political leaders to recognise that none of us are safe until all of us are safe - and the best way to achieve that is to join those calling for the TRIPS waiver. Instead of a People’s Vaccine we have a Profit Vaccine.”

### **Helmut Scholz (MP-GUE-Germany)**

It’s a question of interests of ALL members of the WTO. WTO rulebook ALLOWS WTO to have this waiver. Big Pharma is pressing on certain governments. The European Parliament has agreed now FOUR TIMES to hold this line to support the waiver. The Commission must be held accountable.”

**Stefanie Prezioso (MP-Ensemble à Gauche-Switzerland)**

Not only is Switzerland blocking the waiver, but our government is being very non-transparent about its contracts with Big Pharma, such as Moderna. It has a contract with Moderna to build one of the first production facilities here and is allowing Moderna to avoid paying taxes to our neighbors. Millions of dead people are asking us to hold them accountable. We must lift the intellectual property.

**Marc Botenga (MP-GUE-European Parliament - Belgium)** This is a crime against humanity and the European Commission is complicity. This is a struggle for human rights and we will continue fighting for it. "Intellectual property rights block global access to vaccine technology, limiting vaccine production and increasing global shortages. Big Pharma reaps huge profits at the expense of global health. In poor countries, only 3% of the population has been fully vaccinated. These shortages facilitate the circulation of the virus and thus encourage the emergence of new variants. This needs to change urgently."

**Nicolas Walder (MP-Green Party-Vice-President Green Party-Switzerland)**

« A l'OMC, la défense par le Conseil fédéral des droits sur les brevets et donc des énormes marges bénéficiaires de l'industrie pharmaceutique est indécente et affaiblit gravement la portée des discours en faveur de la solidarité vaccinale.»

« Seule la levée des brevets permettra d'offrir un accès véritablement universel et rapide aux traitements, vaccins et diagnostics pour les communautés les plus vulnérables. »

« La crise sanitaire est une conséquence directe de nos modes de production et de consommation. C'est ainsi que les communautés les plus vulnérables subissent de plein fouet une pandémie dont elles ne sont pas responsables. Leur accès rapide aux vaccins, traitements et diagnostics doit être une priorité».

**Sangeeta Shashikant (Third World Network)**

"According to official figures, over 5 million people have died of Covid-19. But the reality is even worse: the Economist estimates that the death toll is actually 17 million, and the majority is in developing countries. Not just lives, livelihoods are at stake as well. It's the worst crisis since the global financial crisis, and the longer the pandemic continues, the suffering will continue. This is because of the lack of equity in treatments, diagnostics, and vaccines. Remove the legal barriers to production, so that manufacturers all over the world can address their needs. The supply constraints are artificial. Developing country manufacturers were supplying vaccines all over the world. They have WHO pre-qualification. When the pandemic emerged, there were promises of global solidarity. But what we have seen is global obstruction by rich countries, which have vaccinated the majority of their populations. We need a meaningful outcome so that we can scale up production of vaccines, tests, treatments, and medical products, and the only way to do so is to waive patents, trade secrets, copyright, and industrial designs for the prevention, containment and treatment of Covid-19."

**Fatima Hassan (Health Justice Initiative-South Africa)**

"I'm speaking here from South Africa, because we were banned from traveling, because our highly trained scientists were very transparent and shared the information on the Omicron variant with the world. While we boost the global north with 3rd and 4th shots, let's work to boost equity in the global south too - many are waiting for shot 1. The WTO has become irrelevant to the equity agenda- it's delay is contributing to vaccine apartheid, new variants and suffering - why will it not listen to 110 states that support the waiver - this is ridiculous- we are in a pandemic. It took only a few hours to shut down the world economy because of a variant. But for more than a year, the countries in the rich north will not take on the Pharma industry. As a person who grew up under apartheid, this is vaccine apartheid. We are going to have more variants if we do not scale up production for the world. But we are in a continent that only has a 7% vaccination rate in Africa. Most countries have not received supplies. COVAX is unable to meet its deliveries, and many of the shipments have come randomly and just before they expire. We have been told to wait until March 2022 to get their first or second shot, even health workers have not been protected. Governments of Germany, UK, Switzerland are scared of the CEOs and boardmembers of pharmaceutical companies and are beholden to them. The WTO is not the solution to address global apartheid. Stop messing with our lives. Pass this waiver right away. We don't need travel bans - we need global solidarity."

**Roman Vega (People's Health Movement, Colombia)**

People are dying, in urban and rural areas, in countries of the global South. We need to increase our unity in achieving the right to health by strengthening our struggle for a public and universal health system, by achieving universal and equitable access to vaccines, medicines and protective equipment against the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Rob Johnston, International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF)**

It's the very same transport workers who are now at risk. The same governments who say they recognize the contribution of those workers to global trade, are now blocking them from getting access to vaccines. Global Supply chains are GSC - they do not function if workers do not have access to vaccines. We call for action now to enable workers across the world, populations, and communities, to have access.

**Baba Aye, Public Services International (PSI)**

When the vaccination campaign started a year ago, the WHO set two targets for 2021: within 100 days, health workers around the world would all be vaccinated. Second that by the end of this year, 40% of people in ALL countries would be vaccinated. The centrality of health workers to the Covid response informed the first target. But today only 1 in 4 health workers in Africa have been vaccinated. 103 countries will not make the mark of 40% vaccination by the end of this year. A few multinational corporations are profiting from vaccines largely developed by public funds, and they have the backing of a few powerful countries. This is unacceptable. The people who feel the impact of this most, are the poor, workers, people in poor communities, racialized communities. It is difficult to carry out contact tracing in slums, in far-out rural areas. People in shanties cannot quarantine. We have to put people over profit, health before wealth. Very important for now. As the WHO has pointed out, we might be entering an era of pandemic. Countries against the TRIPS waiver are trying to talk about a Pandemic Treaty.

**Julie Ferrua, Union Syndicale Solidaires (France)**

« Avec les brevets, nous payons deux fois les vaccins. Une première fois à travers le financement public de la recherche, une deuxième fois au moment de l'achat des doses à prix fort. En France, 2,5 milliards d'euros payés par notre Sécurité Sociale, l'équivalent salaire annuel et cotisations, de l'embauche, de 59000 infirmier-ères ! »

**Richard Hill, Association for Proper Internet Governance (Switzerland)**

"It's been said that pharmaceutical corporations need patents so they can make profits so they can invest in research & Development. We know that's not true for the Covid vaccines which was largely funded by public research funds. It's also not true in general, because in reality, Big Pharma acts rationally within the capitalist system to maximize shareholder value, that is, to maximize stock prices. And that is done by NOT investing in new products which are not likely to be highly profitable, but rather by acquiring organizations, engaging in stock buybacks, share buybacks, and other financial manipulation. This is well documented I can send the research to anyone who is interested. And it's called financialization - financialization of the pharmaceutical industry. This is rational behavior, maximizing shareholder value, and it does not involve a lot of R&D. It involves things such as "evergreening" - maintaining a patent so that it keeps in force longer than its normal value; preventing generics, for example in Switzerland a generic medicine is not available for a certain type of drug, so it costs ten times as much as it costs across the border in France."

**Pierre-Yves Maillard, Swiss-MP - Union Syndicale Suisse (USS)**

« La levée des brevets sur les vaccins permettrait d'accélérer la protection de toutes les populations du monde et réduirait la défiance qu'inspirent les entreprises qui font des profits colossaux grâce à un bien de première nécessité. »

**Franco Cavalli, Forum Alternativo (Switzerland)**

"I am an oncologist and former president of the international union against cancer. We have the same situation with cancer as with Covid-19 vaccines. The new treatments are unavailable to patients worldwide because of patents. Hundreds of thousands die prematurely every year because of patents. I am president of MediCuba Europe, which encompasses groups across Europe, supporting the development of the Cuban vaccines. WHO has

told me that they are a great hope for the world, also because they have been developed with a traditional technology, and they don't need super cold storage capabilities. So the Cuban vaccine also is great news for the world."

**Christian Dandrès (MP-socialist party-Switzerland)**

"L'accapement de la production de médicaments et de vaccins par un secteur privé est une menace pour la santé de l'humanité qui a un destin biologique commun."

**Frank Prouhet (Collectif brevets sur les vaccins anti-covid. Stop Requisition-France)**

"The time is action to go to the streets. It is not time for travel bans. The priority is to have access to vaccines!"  
« Public Citizen et les chercheurs du Kings College de Londres ont calculé qu'avec 9 milliards de dollars, on pouvait produire en un an de quoi vacciner 4,5 milliards de personnes, soit le nombre de personnes qui n'ont pas accès aux vaccins pour cause d'apartheid vaccinal. »

**Julie Steendam (Coordinator of the Initiative European Citizens' Initiatives: No Profit on Pandemic - Right to a Cure)**

"Back in April 2020, the President of the European Commission Ursula Von der Leyen said that the "Covid-19 vaccine shall be our universal common good". Over 380 organizations call EU citizens to sign the 'No Profit on Pandemic' petition, with the aim to introduce a legislative proposal to the European Commission to make it stick to its promises and remove all patent barriers on Covid-19 technologies."