

**Statement by India - Delivered by Ambassador & PR to the WTO**

**AGENDA 4 - TRIPS COUNCIL MATTERS**

**A. STATUS REPORT ON THE CONSIDERATIONS BY THE TRIPS COUNCIL ON THE "PROPOSAL FOR A WAIVER FROM CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF THE TRIPS AGREEMENT FOR THE PREVENTION, CONTAINMENT AND TREATMENT OF COVID-19" (IP/C/W/669) – STATEMENT BY THE CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL FOR TRIPS**

We thank the TRIPS Council Chair for his status report. India would also like to thank and welcome the latest co-sponsors of the Proposal. My sincere thanks to Members for their kind words and solidarity shown to India, while we are fighting this pandemic.

2. As we speak Chair, the pandemic continues to rage globally with more than 155 million cases and 3.2 million deaths. The rapid surge in many developing and developed countries is a reminder that the virus is learning about and adapting to us faster than we're learning and adapting to it. Covid-19, fuelled by variants, is an ongoing & increasing risk. The pandemic is more severe than ever, more transmissible, deadlier with more human fatigue. There isn't enough vaccine and the virus is gathering strength & speed.

3. Despite the vast public funding and tremendous scientific progress aided by public funded universities that resulted in successful Covid-19 vaccines, global vaccination is lagging behind. Current vaccine manufacturing practices can't be relied on to meet the needs of the world. Vaccine production needs to be scaled up as rapidly as possible. Addressing intellectual property challenges is a prerequisite if we are to meet this objective in the shortest possible time frame.

4. Chair, since our last meeting in March, two events have taken place to encourage vaccine manufacturers to the scale-up COVID-19 vaccine production. We have urged the Secretariat to compile data as part of monitoring and transparency exercise as to how many Voluntary Licensing agreements have been achieved as an outcome of those events, how many additional vaccine doses have been added to the overall capacity and how much of such doses have been actually delivered to countries. This transparency exercise will be useful to see the extent to which these initiatives are delivering.

*[At the outset, India would like to thank the United States for supporting the waiver of Intellectual Property protection for COVID-19 vaccines and agree to participate in text-based negotiations at the WTO. I urge other Members to also join and come in support of text-based negotiations regarding this proposal]*

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5. We support all initiatives that can help in ramping up manufacturing, but they must be explored in parallel. Present approach has raised serious concerns that production and supply is being artificially constrained, as we observe a consistent failure to leverage global manufacturing capacity to deliver equitable access. Notwithstanding the requirement of booster doses that is predicted in response to emerging variants, the world needs more than 10 billion doses annually. Given that existing approach could deliver only 4% of their projected output in 2020. Membership may reflect how and from where the current requirements will be met? What gives some of the Members this comfort that projected production by companies will be achieved this year?

6. To us, it is apparent that the current system is not adequate. Manufacturers in different parts of the world, with vaccine production capacity in millions, are lying idle. We often read estimates, there will be enough vaccines in 2021, but we missed 2020 production projections by 96% & overall production today is not even 1/4 of projection for initial part of 2021.

7. Economists have shown that delaying vaccine deployment in the developing world threatens the safety of citizens of even those countries who financed the vaccines in the first place. Most of the Members have appropriated trillions of dollars of emergency relief for the travel, tourism, hospitality and other industries and are planning billions more. These industries will remain in crisis and reliant on billions more in government help until the pandemic eases. The faster we can bring this emergency to an end, the faster these industries can recover. The temporary TRIPS waiver is one of the tools to help in ending the pandemic and a strong global recovery. We can't bet lives and global recovery on uncertain vaccines and production. Moral suasion has failed and temporary TRIPS Waiver is an option worth exploring. Globally, there were 1.8 million deaths reported from Covid-19 in 2020. At the current rate, there will be even more deaths in 2021. But this isn't inevitable; pandemics aren't natural disasters. As DG said at the 14<sup>th</sup> April event, 'this is something in Members' control'. We can control Covid-19, if we act now to boost manufacturing through textual discussions on the Waiver. The failure to respond in a timely manner on the TRIPS Waiver proposal undermines the legitimacy and credibility of WTO. We are once again urging, those Members who are still not convinced, to give this tool a chance to succeed and save lives and economy.

8. We may have different opinions on whether the third way was the first way tried during middle of 2020, but it is a fact that third wave is here.

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