

Parliamentarians call on world governments for "A dose of solidarity"

One year ago, the WHO ended the global emergency status for COVID-19, after four years facing the most significant health threat in decades. It's a glimmer of hope, but it's also critical to remember that a new pandemic is inevitable. We cannot predict the moment it will happen, or the virus which will cause it, but one thing is certain: vaccines are among the most effective public health tools, and will therefore continue to be a pillar of our response, saving millions of lives each year. Vaccines are also an undeniable human right.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic occurred in a two-tiered world, where Northern countries enjoyed accelerated access to vaccines, whilst Southern countries faced considerable delays. Although progress has been made on this during the fight against the pandemic, inequalities between the Global North and the Global South persist.

In the exercise of our parliamentary duties, we have firmly committed to prioritising health in our policies, both nationally and internationally. We have pledged to increase the resources allocated to this vital sector, particularly concerning vaccination, in order to meet the needs of our countries, of our continent, and of the world. We are committed to protecting the world, because it is the only way our citizens will be protected as well.

Today, significant challenges remain, and the fading of the pandemic from our debates must not decrease our mobilisation and vigilance on this issue. Only a new global pact on pandemics and vaccination efforts can ensure that future generations are better equipped to face a crisis similar to that caused by COVID-19. Despite the fragmentation and division our world faces, international cooperation remains the one and only path to finding global solutions to global challenges. It is time to act to ensure true progress in the fight against diseases, by strengthening global access to vaccines.

We, current and former parliamentarians of the world, are calling, during this World Immunisation Week, on governments worldwide:

- To advocate for these positions in ongoing negotiations, which must accelerate if we are to achieve the very first international agreement on pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response;
- To support the replenishment of resources for Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, in order to ensure equitable access to vaccines and the launch of the African Vaccine Manufacturing Accelerator (AVMA);
- To mobilise funding for research for the development of new vaccines.

2024 is of paramount importance. On June 20th, France will, in collaboration with the African Union, host in Paris the launch of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance's resource

replenishment for the 2026-2030 period, as well as the African Vaccine Manufacturing Accelerator (AVMA). This mechanism will enable vaccine manufacturers in Africa to increase their production and become sustainable in the long term. Renewing Gavi's resources for an additional four years will accelerate vaccination rates, reach more unvaccinated children, strengthen health systems, and collectively protect us against new health threats related to climate change.

As members of parliament, we will on this occasion take on the role of mobilising our governments and public opinion, and we will continue to collectively advocate for a more solidarity-driven and healthier world.

First signatories:

Ricardo B. Leite, Founder & President of the UNITE network

Guillaume Gouffier Valente, French Member of Parliament, member of the parliamentary club Unis pour la santé and of the UNITE network

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