



**ENHANCING THE ROLE OF THE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION IN THE GLOBAL  
EFFORT TOWARD THE PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF  
COVID-19 VACCINES AND OTHER MEDICAL PRODUCTS**

COMMUNICATION FROM AUSTRALIA, CANADA, CHILE, COLOMBIA, NEW ZEALAND,  
NORWAY AND TURKEY

The following communication, dated 9 March 2021, is being circulated at the request of the delegations of Australia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, New Zealand, Norway and Turkey.

---

1.1. There is an urgent need to further enhance the international effort to promote the rapid, global and equitable distribution of affordable, safe and effective COVID-19-related medical products, and vaccines in particular, with a view to limiting the impact of the pandemic on people, economies and societies, and to help foster a rapid, inclusive, sustainable and resilient recovery. The co-sponsors of this communication believe that the scaling up of vaccine production must be a fundamental priority, as no one is safe until everyone is safe. The co-sponsors of this communication recognize the significant contributions of multilateral cooperation and innovative approaches such as the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator and the COVAX Facility, and believe that the WTO can similarly contribute to these global efforts in a complementary fashion.

1.2. In these exceptional times that require a strong and purposeful multilateral response to end the pandemic, the co-sponsors of this communication believe that the WTO, as the global hub for trade, and particularly in a pandemic where the relevance of trade for lives and livelihoods has become even more evident, possesses considerable convening power. We further believe that the WTO should rapidly make use of its resources to the full extent to foster a prompt, pragmatic and tangible acceleration in the global response to COVID-19, and particularly the global distribution of COVID-19 vaccines. We believe that the WTO, and particularly its Secretariat, can and should undertake this work in parallel to ongoing discussions among Members on the trade-related aspects of the COVID-19 response, and without prejudice to these discussions.

1.3. The co-sponsors of this communication therefore earnestly encourage the Director-General to promptly convene and hold discussions with both vaccine developers and vaccine manufacturers, as well as developers and manufacturers of other COVID-19-related medical products, in coordination with the World Health Organization and other relevant organizations, toward:

- helping to ensure that any unused or underutilized capacity for the production of affordable, safe and effective vaccines, at any stage in the process, is promptly identified and used as fully as it is technically possible, with a view to a net increase in global production of COVID-19 vaccines, and provided that this is not to the detriment of the production of other essential vaccines;
- promptly facilitating and promoting the creation of mutually beneficial licensing partnerships between vaccine developers and vaccine manufacturers, including for the collaborative and prompt transfer of expertise, know-how and technology;
- promptly identifying and addressing, in a consensus-based manner, any trade-related impediments to the utilization of production capacity and the scaling up of vaccine production, as well as to the production and distribution of other COVID-19-related medical

products, recalling the right of WTO Members to use, to the full, the provisions in the TRIPS Agreement, which provide flexibility to protect public health and, in particular, to promote access to medicines for all; and

- promoting, through similar approaches, the broad availability of other essential COVID-19-related medical products, such as diagnostics, therapeutics, equipment and devices.

1.4. The co-sponsors of this communication further encourage the Director-General to provide Members with regular updates, as appropriate, on any such discussions.

---