

**General Council Meeting  
23 – 24 February, 2022**

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

**Agenda Item 7: TRIPS COUNCIL MATTERS**

**A. STATUS REPORT ON THE CONSIDERATIONS BY THE TRIPS COUNCIL ON THE REVISED "PROPOSAL FOR A WAIVER FROM CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF THE TRIPS AGREEMENT FOR THE PREVENTION, CONTAINMENT AND TREATMENT OF COVID-19" (IP/C/W/669/REV.1) – STATEMENT BY THE CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL FOR TRIPS**

Thank you Chair.

Good morning colleagues. We welcome new co-sponsor of IP/C/W/669/Rev.1, Argentina and thank Members who have changed their stance and have started supporting the waiver. India takes note of the factual report. It is regrettable that for the past year, we have been making a similar report to the General Council reflecting a lack of movement on this urgent and one of the most critical issues on our agenda. We recognise that extraordinary measures are imperative to combat the pandemic and overcome the challenges we are facing, an outcome on the TRIPS Waiver, an extraordinary measure, towards saving lives, livelihoods, and economies has eluded us.

2. Since the introduction of this proposal, many new variations have arisen causing more uncertainties and unpredictable abilities. Time is definitely not in our favour and my concern is that losing further time on taking a decision, will render the outcome ineffective.

3. Persisting vaccine inequity has resulted in new variants and strains of the virus that has led to a devastating global impact not only on sustainable economic recovery especially for developing world including the LDCs but has further eroded the efforts made so far by countries in the form of vaccinations. It further reinforces the need for a comprehensive test, treat and prevent strategy thus, availability, accessibility and affordability of not only vaccines but also therapeutics and diagnostics will remain crucial to combat the disease.

4. The longer we take to overcome this pandemic, the longer it would take for the developing and the least developed countries to recover. In fact, studies show that the recovery rate is predicted to be faster for countries with higher vaccination rates, with about US\$7.93 billion increase in global GDP for every million people vaccinated. For low-income countries where vaccination rates are low, the path to recovery will be long and uncertain unless corrective measures are taken.

5. The additional demands in the form of booster doses, annual vaccinations, and vaccinations for children will ensure that the existing inequity in access and affordability persists.

6. India along with other co-sponsors of the proposal have been constructively engaging in discussions on the Waiver proposal. In fact, India has been insisting for a comprehensive, balanced and meaningful WTO response to pandemic, that will both enable Members to tackle the ongoing crisis as well as restore the credibility of this institution. Its unthinkable that a prominent world organisation like ours, does not deliver in the most extraordinary of circumstances.

7. In order to sustain the momentum built on this proposal, discussions are also ongoing under the DG led process. The outcome of the process needs to be practical, inclusive and effective, an outcome that can secure the consensus of the broader membership. The global community has suffered for long, saving lives must be prioritised and therefore, despite the divergences, we must strive hard to achieve an effective outcome and deliver on the waiver, I am certain that all members would agree that this is a fight we cannot afford to lose – even at the cost of being called ‘insane’ by few who are always ‘sane’

Thank you Chair.

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