



Stephen Doughty MP
House of Commons
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Amanda Solloway MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
Minister for Science, Research and Innovation
1 Victoria Street
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United Kingdom

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Dear Minister

We are writing to request a meeting to discuss the UK's support for the proposal by South Africa and India to waive parts of the TRIPS (Trade Related Aspects to Intellectual Property rights) Agreement for the duration of the COVID- 19 pandemic.

As you may know the aim of waiver is to prevent intellectual property (IP) barriers from restricting access to COVID-19 medicines, tools, devices and vaccines to ensure all health systems are equipped with the health technologies they need to end this pandemic.

We are aware that the UK Government rejected the text on the Waiver at the TRIPS Council meeting on 15th-16th October saying that it was not necessary whilst also stating that existing measures to overcome IP barriers would suffice. However with more examples emerging of where exclusive rights have created barriers to accessing respirators, ventilators, testing kits and treatments for Covid-19, and with the licensing of a vaccine looking more imminent, we feel it is a matter of urgency to discuss this position with you.

We need pharmaceutical companies to share their intellectual property rights and their know-how for producing these vaccines to allow the scale-up in manufacturing capacity required to meet global demand. By removing IP barriers the waiver proposal will help this to happen, it will also make products more affordable by enabling generic competition to help drive down prices. In addition removing IP barriers will also help manufacturers in low and middle income countries make more locally relevant tools to help manage the pandemic. There is not just a moral case for the pharmaceutical industry to do this, but a public value argument, over \$12 billion of public money has been invested into the 6 leading vaccine candidates including funds from UK taxpayers.

We know from the history of these epidemics how exclusive intellectual property rights can create highly inequitable access with catastrophic consequences. We must learn from the mistakes that have been made in the past.

We are aware that a separate cross-party and cross-house letter has also been sent to your Department on this issue. Considering the complexity of this matter we would like to request a meeting with the Minister and colleagues from civil society to discuss the UK's position after the TRIPS Council meeting today.

Yours Sincerely,

Stephen Doughty MP Chair APPG HIV & AIDS
Lord Black of Blackwood Vice Chair APPG HIV & AIDS
Baroness Barker Vice Chair APPG HIV & AIDS