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January 25, 2021

Prof. Daya Reddy
President, International Science Council

CC: Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
Director General of the World Health Organization

CC: Dr. Heide Hackmann
Chief Executive Officer, International Science Council

Dear Prof. Reddy

Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of the World Health Organization has issued a most urgent and eloquent call on worldwide coordination of the vaccination efforts against the COVID-19 pandemic. We kindly ask academies and scientific associations to join us in endorsing this call from the WHO Director General and appealing to all governments for coordinated, equitable, efficient and sustained action; and request that the International Science Council and federations of academies and scientific associations support our invitation and proliferate it among member organizations, unions and associations.

The Science Academy – Bilim Akademisi - Turkey endorses the statement made by Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of the World Health Organization, in his opening remarks at the 148th Session of the WHO Executive Board. The statement from Dr. Tedros makes clear the moral as well as scientific, indeed common sense, arguments for a proper international vaccination effort. To quote:

“It’s right that all governments want to prioritize vaccinating their own health workers and older people first. But it’s not right that younger, healthier adults in rich countries are vaccinated before health workers and older people in poorer countries. The world is on the brink of a catastrophic moral failure – and the price of this failure will be paid with lives and livelihoods in the world’s poorest countries. The world is on the brink of a catastrophic moral failure – and the price of this failure will be paid with lives and livelihoods in the world’s poorest countries. ...Ultimately, these actions will only prolong the pandemic, the restrictions needed to contain it, and human and economic suffering. Vaccine equity is not just a moral imperative, it is a strategic and economic imperative.”

We specifically endorse:

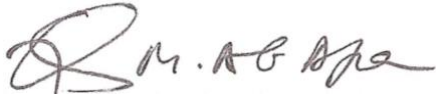
“(A) call on all countries to work together in solidarity to ensure that within the first 100 days of this year, vaccination of health workers and older people is underway in all countries. ... in the best interest of each and every nation on Earth.

First, we call on countries with bilateral contracts – and control of supply – to be transparent on these contracts with COVAX, including on volumes, pricing and delivery dates. We call on these countries to give much greater priority to COVAX’s place in the queue, and to share their own doses with COVAX, especially once they have vaccinated their own health workers and older populations, so that other countries can do the same.

Second, we call on vaccine producers to provide WHO with full data for regulatory review in real time, to accelerate approvals. We also call on producers to allow countries with bilateral contracts to share doses with COVAX, and to prioritize supplying COVAX rather than new bilateral deals.

And third, we call on all countries introducing vaccines to only use vaccines that meet rigorous international standards for safety, efficacy and quality, and to accelerate readiness for deployment.”

With best regards and wishes of good health for all,



M. Ali Alpar,
President, on behalf of the Executive Board, The Science Academy (Bilim Akademisi), Turkey
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