

Committee: World Health Organization

Topic: Rules to temporarily waive patent protection for promising vaccines during global health emergencies.

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Background information:

With seven billion people on the planet today living in a global pandemic and vaccines not nearly enough to cover the demand it is necessary to ensure that the Covid-19 vaccines become more effective and readily available. The five main producers of the aforementioned vaccine are responsible for around 90 percent of the global production. Many countries with high demand and the belief that they have the technology and capacity to produce the vaccines have been pushing for a waiver regarding the vaccine patents. Although this waiver would be temporary the companies themselves believe that this would only stunt the research being conducted regarding the vaccine and its evolution. The companies are mostly being guarded by the countries they are based in often very influential members of the UN. Countries mostly act in their own interest regarding this situation because many analysts lean towards both sides of the issue and therefore there is no clear outcome to the problem facing the UN.

UN involvement:

The United Nations take the side of the countries for the patent waiver. From every committee involved in the topic most of the UN personnel are quite vocal and try to encourage the opposing states to vote for the waiver. To name a few the health chief of the WHO has gone out and spoken quite strongly for the patent waiver being released as he thinks it is critical to the further distribution of the vaccine. *Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus (the UN health chief) has stated*

"It opens (the patent waiver release) the opportunity for vaccine producers to share the knowledge and technology that will allow the effective expansion of locally-produced vaccines and can significantly increase the supply to the COVAX facility". He also remarked: "We must also ensure that countries have the materials required to produce these vaccines. We are all agreed: none of us will be safe from the virus until all of us are safe." The most active states in this topic continue to be South Africa and India both of which have proposed the waiver initially. This is what the Director General of the WHO stated regarding the matter. *"Whether it's dose sharing, tech transfer or voluntary licensing, as the WHO's own Covid-19 Technology Access Pool initiative encourages, or waiving intellectual property rights, as South Africa and India have suggested, we need to pull out all the stops".*

Questions to consider:

How is the delegates country involved in the vaccine distribution/manufacturing process?

How is the delegates country being affected by the vaccine distribution restrictions?

Does the delegates country have a vaccine of its own?

Does the delegates country benefit from the distribution of said vaccine?

What is my countries policy regarding patent protection?

Does the delegates country have enough vaccines to supply the nations demand?

Does the delegates country have the necessary facilities to produce covid vaccines?

Would the delegates country benefit from manufacturing the vaccines internally?

How much of the population of the delegates country been vaccinated?

How does the waiver affect the development of the vaccine?

Is it safe to release the patent?

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Useful sources:

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<https://allea.org/a-patent-waiver-is-not-a-silver-bullet-in-the-pursuit-of-vaccine-equity/>

<https://www.theregreview.org/2022/01/13/khodor-support-waiver-covid-19-vaccine-patents/>

<https://www.who.int/news-room/commentaries/detail/waive-covid-vaccine-patents-to-put-world-on-war-footing>

<https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/debate-over-patent-waiver-covid-19-vaccines-what-know>

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20210604IPR05514/parliament-calls-for-temporary-covid-19-vaccine-patent-waiver>

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