

**Full-day intersessional seminar on good practices, key challenges and new developments relevant to access to medicines and vaccines**

8 December 2021 | 10:00-12:00 and 14:30-16:30 (CEST)

Virtual meeting on Zoom platform / Room XX Palais des Nations, Geneva

***PANEL II. Global cooperation and measures to improve the universal access to health as a fundamental human right***

Mr President,

APG23 welcomes this full-day intersessional seminar on access to medicines and vaccines and, in particular, this panel focusing on Global cooperation and measures to improve the universal access to health as a fundamental human right.

The already existing inequities within and between countries, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, are not inevitable but a dramatic consequence of distributive injustice and policy failure worldwide. The unfairness in the global distribution and administration of vaccines has tragically unveiled the rhetoric of slogans such as "leave no one behind" and the unmet commitments on sustainable development. Solidarity remains a mirage, entangled as it is in the broken threads of a facade multilateralism.

Too many poor people are humiliated in the unfruitful search of health care in areas of the world already impoverished by external and internal factors.

The full enjoyment of the right to health is closely linked also to other human rights such as the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, the right to safe drinking water and sanitation, the right to food and the right to education. All these rights are deeply hindered by financial, economic, infrastructural, social and environmental obstacles that are present not only at national but, especially, at international level. A fair approach to international cooperation is essential to ensure sustainable development for all and to act on the social determinants of health.

In this regard, the implementation of the Right to Development is a crucial element as well the fostering of an international cooperation applied without conditions as envisioned in the proposed draft declaration on the right to International Solidarity.

In order to counteract the existing inequities and ensure access to medicines and vaccines, prompt structural measures should be taken such as debt cancellation, ending unilateral coercive measures, countering tax havens and corruption, democratic reforms of financial institutions, increasing the Official Development Assistance and reducing military expenditures with the redirection of the released resources towards social protection. Equally urgent is the need to strengthen public health systems, support universal health coverage, and approve the TRIPS waiver under the auspice of the World Trade Organization with the aim to guarantee free and universal access to the vaccines and tools required to control the pandemic.

The world is tired of short-sighted approaches that put profit maximization before human lives. Dear panellists, which steps should States undertake to solve this crisis with consistent human rights-based solutions? If not now, when?

Thank You!