Warsaw, 3 October 2022

With reference to the call for contributions from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the equitable, affordable, timely and universal access for all countries to vaccines in response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, Poland would like to present its answers to the areas in question below.

**1a/ The human rights implications and the impact on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health of affordable, timely, equitable and universal access and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines.**

On December 15, 2020, the National Vaccination Program for the prevention of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) was adopted in Poland. The first vaccine supplies secured by the European Union arrived in Poland on December 26, 2020. On December 27, 2020, the first Polish citizen, the “participant zero,” was vaccinated against COVID-19 at the Central Clinical Hospital of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration in Warsaw, which initiated one of the largest vaccination programs in the Polish history, as a response to the serious pandemic threat.

In the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, a strategic goal was adopted to achieve a level of vaccination of the population that would enable the pandemic to be brought under control, using free and readily available vaccinations, while maintaining the highest safety standards.

Poles had access to COVID-19 vaccines in over 8,000 vaccination centers operating across the country. Vaccination of medical staff was prioritized initially, followed by vaccination of chronic disease patients and residents of long-term care institutions, nursing homes and social centers. When the programme was already underway, the Polish government allowed additional qualified health professionals (i.e. nurses, paramedics, final-year medical students and pharmacists) to administer vaccines. No compulsory vaccination had been introduced.

Poland as one of the first few EU Member States developed a national digital vaccination certificate based on a QR code, used for presentation of a narrow scope of anonymized information. Every vaccinated person has an access to the certificate through the Patient Internet Account.

The number of vaccinations performed in Poland is over 56 million. The number of persons fully vaccinated has now exceeded more than 22 million. In order to encourage people to get inoculated several incentives have been introduced. These are among others: lottery; involvement of numerous entities and celebrities in the promotion of vaccines; vaccinations in workplaces, schools; mobile vaccination points, etc.

**1b/ Good practices and key challenges in ensuring affordable, timely, equitable and universal access and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines.**

**Universal access and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines**

In the fight against COVID-19, international cooperation and solidarity is very important. In this respect, Poland cooperates with international organizations, primarily the World Health Organization and the European Union, but also with individual countries. This cooperation covers both actions directly aimed at combating the pandemic, as well as forward-looking actions in order to better respond to similar epidemics and their consequences.

Poland has donated or resold vaccines against COVID-19 to other countries. The offer to donate/resell vaccine doses is an expression of solidarity and support for our partners but also a contribution to global health security. We hope that joint efforts, especially ongoing vaccinations, will allow for the return to normality as soon as possible. This cooperation should further improve the already friendly relations between our countries and provide opportunities to bring the nations closer together.

**Free COVID-19 vaccinations for Ukrainian refugees**

The outbreak of the Russian aggression against Ukraine contributed to the largest migration movement in the 21st century. As a result, over 6 million refugees, mainly women, children and older persons, arrived in Poland in a short time. Despite the ongoing war, it is important to remember that the COVID-19 pandemic is still present in the world. With regard to the Russian military invasion on the territory of Ukraine, the Ministry of Health, taking into account the health of Ukrainian refugees, has extended the possibility of vaccination against COVID-19 to Ukrainian citizens being currently in Poland under the same conditions as for Polish citizens. Each Ukrainian refugee over 5 years of age who has not yet been vaccinated against COVID-19 according to the recommended vaccination schedule may be vaccinated or get a vaccination booster with preparations available in Poland. Vaccination against COVID-19 for foreigners legally residing in Poland is free of charge.