

Message to world leaders from faith leaders across Africa

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During this period when our religions encourage us to reflect and look forward to a time of renewal, we urge world leaders to take immediate action to address the massive global inequity in access to Covid-19 vaccines, tests, and treatment. In the context of conflict, humanitarian emergencies, and looming famines, we must remember that the people who are most affected by these crises are also still being affected by the global Covid-19 pandemic.

As we reflect, we are gladdened by the scientific achievements that enabled the creation of vaccines and therapeutics at a rapid scale. This must be viewed as a gift for the common good and not be controlled by powerful countries and corporations, much to the detriment of people in lower-income countries.

We are one global family, where our problems are tightly interconnected. However, we know the greatest impediment to people getting their vaccinations, tests, and treatment is inequity. More than two years have passed since the start of the pandemic, and we have made little progress in ensuring people in low-income countries are fully vaccinated. This inequity has created an unjust reality where the Covid-19 death toll is four times higher in lower-income countries than in rich ones.

The global pandemic is far from over. More than 6,000 people are dying from Covid-19 each day and cases are on the rise. We urge world leaders to act with compassion and ensure the world's most vulnerable people have access to lifesaving Covid-19 vaccines, tests, and treatment. That requires properly financing the global response, sharing the technology and know-how needed to produce them, and removing barriers to production like intellectual property rules.

Only 20% of the population on the African continent have had their first vaccine, which is in stark contrast to many wealthy countries where over a third have received their third dose. We urge world leaders not to see this statistic as just a number, but as a reminder that each statistic represents a human being. A human being who deserves dignity and the ability to thrive in a post-pandemic world.

World leaders must renew their approach to tackling the response to the global pandemic by treating Covid-19 vaccines, tests, and treatment not as commodities but as public goods, which all people have the right to access. We encourage world leaders to unite and stand in solidarity with people from low-income countries by supporting a People's Vaccine.

Signed,

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