



For Immediate Release

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## **VACCINE EQUALITY FOR ALL: UNLESS ALL ARE SAFE, NO ONE IS SAFE**

### **Civil Society Collective for Covid 19 Response calls out international community to support VACCINE EQUALITY FOR ALL**

Sri Lanka's Civil Society Collective for Covid 19 Response urges all countries to prioritise vaccine equality for all. It call upon countries with a surplus of vaccines and other resources to share and donate vaccines across the globe to manage an effective vaccination programme.

Sri Lanka Civil Society Collective stated these concerns in letters to foreign embassies and representatives of international organizations in Colombo, reiterating this message - VACCINE EQUALITY FOR ALL: UNLESS ALL ARE SAFE, NO ONE IS SAFE

The CSO collective communicated this message to the Embassies of Australia, Canada, India, France, Germany, Bangladesh, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Romania, Russia, Switzerland, China, United Kingdom, United States of America, the delegation of European Union as well as with the resident representatives of the United Nations and the World Health Organization.

The collective emphasizes the need to “make doses available to vaccinate populations in the manner required by science.” It calls for “widening the supply and distribution chains and enabling more countries to manufacture vaccines without being constrained by stringent licencing laws and patent protections. This is, after all, an unprecedented global crisis – not a commercial opportunity to be exploited”.

Also, the collective stressed that enabling the basic human right to health should not be caught up in the exercise of “vaccine diplomacy” and be the subject of strategic, geopolitical bargains. The international community must commit to mass vaccinations and concentrate its efforts as it has done, creditably with smallpox and polio. This effort calls for a structural change with reforms to intellectual property constraints on global pandemic responses and encourages the broad based use of technology and resource sharing to ensure global production of vaccines. Overseas development assistance by way of vaccine donations is welcome and much needed in the short run, but it is inadequate as a pandemic response mechanism in the long run.

Vaccine Equality For All requires equality within countries too. The Civil Society Collective for COVID-19 Response highlights the regional disparities in vaccinations and numerous instances of the powerful being privileged at the expense of front line workers in Sri Lanka. The CSO Collective noted that the vaccination drive is being implemented without a transparent plan, adequate communication and a credible process. As the international community contributes to vaccinations in Sri Lanka either bilaterally or through the global mechanism, the CSO collective urges respective countries and organizations to raise these concerns in discussions with the Sri Lankan government and urge the government to abide by the principles of transparency and equality that it requires of the international community .

As the supply of vaccines is limited , Sri Lanka should adhere to the roll out of the vaccine based on clear principles of need (prioritizing front line workers in the health sectors, essential services, those with co-morbidities etc.,) transparency and equality. Also, the CSO collective expects UN agencies such as UNICEF and WHO that facilitate

*The Civil Society Collective for COVID-19 Response is a collective of civil society organisations that have come together to contribute to the national COVID response efforts. The CSO collective primarily focusses on supporting most vulnerable groups affected by the pandemic with emergency food and hygiene materials. It also advocates on issues that affect these vulnerable groups during the pandemic. The CSO collective consists of 25 district representatives and 15 core group members at the national level coordinating the response of participating CSOs throughout the country. For any details you may contact [csocollectivesl@gmail.com](mailto:csocollectivesl@gmail.com)*

the global vaccine donations to ensure that the Sri Lankan government adheres to a transparent and scientific vaccination plan.

The CSO collective also highlights, the impact of the pandemic on livelihoods in Sri Lanka and requests foreign countries and organizations to consider targeted food relief assistance to poor and vulnerable families.

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