

Proposal on a Global Procurement System for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Vaccines

Health and Global Policy Institute
Immunization and Vaccination Policy Promotion Project
Special Advisors

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Starting in 2020, Health and Global Policy Institute (HGPI) has been engaged in an immunization and vaccination policy promotion project titled “Immunization and Vaccination Policy Promotion Project - Charting the Way Forward on Immunization Policy: International Trends and the Situation in Japan - ” As part of that project, HGPI will gather an advisory board that includes opinion leaders and related organizations in this field representing industry, government, academia, and civil society which will identify issues that must be addressed in the future. These include the value of vaccines during ordinary times and during emergencies, the best methods of communicating the value of vaccines, the importance of immunization over the entire life course, and methods of approaching unvaccinated generations. We will then indicate the direction of solutions.

Based on past discussions held as part of this project, we have synthesized the advice from our special advisors into this proposal, the “Proposal on a Global Procurement System for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Vaccines.” Their recommendations are as follows.

- **We should not rely entirely on the mechanisms of the market to develop and distribute vaccines. Rather, vaccines should be developed and distributed through multilateral, international frameworks which operate in a truly equal manner and treat vaccines as global public goods.**
- **It is crucial to ensure vaccines are safe and effective, so it is necessary to build a rapid response system for that purpose.**
- **When establishing vaccination priorities, multidisciplinary knowledge should be accumulated through transparent and open discussions and then applied.**

While multilateralism has been challenged by a variety of factors, the impact of COVID-19 has had a profound impact on both developing countries and developed countries. Efforts should be made to ensure vaccines are procured and distributed through frameworks for multilateral joint purchasing that operate under the principle of international cooperation. An example of one such framework is the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) Facility. Vaccines are widely recognized as public goods that contribute to public health by controlling the spread of infections, thereby protecting both vaccinated people and unvaccinated people. Cooperation among the international community is necessary to eliminate threats when faced with diseases like COVID-19 and it is important that measures taken during those efforts are done so with a shared recognition of vaccines as global public goods.

At the same time, discussions on the safety and efficacy of vaccines are unavoidable. Vaccination programs should begin only after a system is in place for rapidly responding to people who experience adverse reactions. Establishing mechanisms for sharing new information internationally is also important. While discussions on vaccination priorities are advancing at the Government’s expert subcommittee, efforts should be made to ensure those discussions are transparent and open and are based on the latest knowledge from various disciplines, and that information is disseminated in a careful manner to avoid vaccine hesitancy.

Thorough efforts are needed to ensure that these global public goods are spread throughout the world in time for the commencement of the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics in 2021.

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