

Statement to the 148th session of the WHO Executive Board

Agenda Item 14.1

COVID-19 response

Health Action International is pleased to comment on the report of the Director General on the Covid-19 response. We commend how WHO has been attempting to coordinate global effort to confront this deadly pandemic, despite the lack of resources and in some cases the dearth of collaboration from Member States. Initiatives like the Solidarity Therapeutics Trial stand out as a milestone in global health promotion that provided key information in the early stages of the pandemic.

WHO has also joined efforts with other organisations and stakeholders, but on occasion have ceded leadership and initiative to actors not as committed to transparency or civil society participation. While any global attempt to secure universal and equitable access to vaccines should be supported, it is concerning that contribution and expertise from public interest NGOs, especially those based in low- and middle-income countries, is not considered relevant.

We are surprised that the document fails to acknowledge the Covid-19 Technologies Pool (C-TAP), a platform which, by gathering and channeling IP, know-how and other relevant data could play critical role in transferring technology and scaling up production of vaccines, diagnostics and other health goods necessary to vanquish this pandemic.

Finally, the fact that wealthier countries, some of them sitting at this Executive Board, are hoarding vaccine doses while other countries are unable to procure treatments for their vulnerable groups or healthcare workers is shameful and WHO should be more vocal in denouncing the exclusive deals that are weakening us all.