



To: Fumio Kishida, Prime Minister, Japan  
Joe Biden, President, United States  
Emmanuel Macron, President, France  
Giorgia Meloni, Prime Minister, Italy  
Olaf Scholz, Chancellor, Germany  
Rishi Sunak, Prime Minister, United Kingdom  
Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister, Canada

Dear G7 Leaders,

As scientists and physicians who have dedicated our lives to scientific progress and the betterment of humanity, we are writing to you with a sense of urgency regarding the state of global pandemic preparedness. We firmly believe that the world is not adequately prepared for the next pandemic or public health emergency, and we urge you to take immediate action to address this critical issue.

COVID-19 exposed many vulnerabilities in prevention, preparedness, and response to health threats. The most glaring challenge has been the global inequity in access to lifesaving medical products, technologies, and know-how. Astounding scientific advances were made in response to the SARS-CoV-2 virus – supported by unprecedented public funding. But, despite repeated warnings that “no one is safe until everyone is safe,” the benefits of these advancements remained in control of the wealthiest countries and have been used to maximize the profits of pharmaceutical companies.

Had vaccines, treatments, and tests been shared equitably, and had health systems been properly resourced to prepare and respond to COVID-19, countless lives could have been saved. The world cannot afford to repeat these mistakes in the next global health crisis. That is why a comprehensive Pandemic Accord at the World Health Organization (WHO) and a revision of the international health regulations (IHRs) are an essential step for the safety and preservation of human rights for people in all countries.

It is critical that in the next health crisis the world rapidly deploys medical countermeasures in every country, regardless of their ability to pay. This requires removing every barrier to the development and production of medicines and vaccines - an area where the world failed during



the COVID-19 and AIDS pandemics. Upholding strict intellectual property rules secured monopolies for pharmaceutical companies and prevented the widespread production of affordable generic vaccines and medicines in developing countries.

The Zero Draft of the WHO convention, agreement or other international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response includes important measures to address intellectual property and know-how, such as provisions to increase the transfer of medical technology to developing countries and to support the suspension of intellectual property rules. If adequately strengthened during negotiations, these provisions could significantly increase access to critical medical products in a future crisis.

We write with alarm, shock and disappointment that pharmaceutical companies have met with the President of the G7 to lobby against these important clauses<sup>1</sup>. Pharmaceutical lobbyists are advocating for a maximalist approach to intellectual property, disregarding the impact on public health. This is an extreme view that flies in the face of mainstream scientific opinion.

This position endangers the kind of scientific collaboration that is essential to properly prevent, prepare for, and respond to health crises, especially infectious diseases. It condemns most people who live in low and middle-income countries to remain at the back of the line in any future pandemic and exposes them inequitably to death and devastation for longer than people in high income countries.

We write to you to emphasize and ask that you centre the protection of human rights, such as the right to health and the right to benefit from scientific progress, over windfall profits.

It is our view that one of the greatest steps you can take to be prepared for the next pandemic is to support a Pandemic Accord that upholds human rights and scientific collaboration by removing barriers to equity. We are not asking you to force or demand that institutions are uncompensated for their work, but we urge you make sure compensation is fair and just, and to resist the lobbying of institutions that have prioritised profits over people and public health needs.

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<sup>1</sup> IFPMA: <https://ifpma.org/news/top-pharma-leaders-meet-with-japanese-officials-to-discuss-g7-global-health-priorities-and-strategic-dialogue-for-life-science-growth-in-japan/>  
Health Policy Watch: <https://healthpolicy-watch.news/pharmaceutical-ceos-to-g7-protect-intellectual-property-rights-and-pathogen-access-in-who-pandemic-accord/>



There is no time to waste. Modelling from Airfinity has predicted that there is a 27.5% chance that a pandemic as deadly as COVID-19 could take place in the next ten years<sup>2</sup>. A study published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences suggests that the annual probability of extreme epidemics occurring could increase threefold in the coming decades<sup>3</sup>. The 2021 Global Health Security Index found that no country was prepared for the next pandemic, and the world overall was no better prepared than in 2019, before the outbreak of COVID-19<sup>4</sup>.

As G7 leaders, you have the power to influence how the world chooses to prepare and respond to future pandemics. We hope that you will stand with scientists and physicians in support of equity and the right to life over the right to reap windfall profits from a health emergency.

Signed,

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**Jorge Bermudez** (MD, DSc) - Senior Researcher & Professor at the National School of Public Health, Fiocruz (*Brazil*)

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<sup>2</sup> Airfinity: <https://www.airfinity.com/articles/a-strong-pandemic-defence-system-could-reduce-the-chance-of-another-covid>

<sup>3</sup> Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences <https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.2105482118>

<sup>4</sup> 2021 Global Health Security Index: <https://www.ghsindex.org/>



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