



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
17 November 2021

English only

Commission for Social Development

Sixtieth session

7–16 February 2022

**Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and
the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly:**

**Priority Theme: Inclusive and resilient recovery from
COVID-19 for sustainable livelihoods, well-being, and
dignity for all: eradicating poverty and hunger in all its
forms and dimensions to achieve the 2030 Agenda**

Statement submitted by New Humanity, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

Calls for Greater Fraternity Between Communities and Nations as the World Responds to the COVID-19 Pandemic

In April 2020, New Humanity together with other organizations launched a petition calling on world leaders to recognize the vaccine as a “global common good.” The petition addressed to the Italian Prime Minister in his capacity as President of the G20 received support from Nobel laureates and various internationally recognized personalities.

The petition called on the United Nations to develop the capacity to produce and distribute vaccines in developing countries. To do so would involve overcoming some major hurdles.

Companies cannot duplicate vaccines the way they reproduce generic medicines such as aspirin. “There is no such thing as a generic vaccine.” Unlike chemically based medicines, “all vaccines need to go through human studies and bear related costs in order to be registered.” Each evolution of the vaccine goes through the full process.

Companies that produced the first vaccines continue to develop new and improved responses to COVID. The entire process involves research and development, manufacturing design and realization, multi-phase trials involving tens of thousands of people, and the documentation and evaluation of results to assess the safety and efficacy of the enhancements to the vaccines. They then seek approval to produce the vaccine from governments following established protocols. The conduct and management of this complex process requires a wide range of experience and skills not easily transferrable.

The knowledge, skill set, and equipment applied by pharmaceutical companies to produce COVID-19 vaccines are not unique to producing that vaccine. They use the same technology to produce the COVID vaccine that they use to produce other products, for example, products to treat cancer or rare diseases. Transferring the technology for producing vaccines is tantamount to transferring their business operations for much of their product line.

An alternative to requiring companies to relinquish their intellectual property and know-how enabling others to clone their business is to incentivize companies to increase their productive capacity. This would take advantage of their proven ability to manage the end-to-end process efficiently.

Most vaccines other than those like the Oxford/Astra-Zeneca product require cold storage which remains an obstacle to wide distribution. The Oxford/Astra Zeneca vaccine has been more widely available in remote areas because of its greater ease of transport. More research is needed to produce easily transportable vaccines.

The current producers of the COVID-19 vaccines are running at full capacity and the governments of developed countries have purchased the entire 2021 output of 13 vaccine producers in advance. These governments control the distribution of the pre-ordered vaccines whether within their own countries or elsewhere.

To achieve greater equality in the distribution of vaccines, New Humanity calls on the United Nations to work through the World Health Organization to:

1. create a fund to provide COVID-19 vaccines to people living in low- and middle-income countries.

2. Work with the governments of developed countries to agree on how to distribute the limited supply of vaccines available from vaccine manufacturers to all countries.
3. Work with vaccine manufacturers to increase their capacity for producing vaccines and make them readily available for people in developing countries.

Recognizing the need for “compassionate care,” Members of New Humanity around the world have found ways to assist people suffering from financial, educational, social, and psychological impact of the pandemic in their local communities.

On March 23, 2020, UN Secretary General António Guterres issued an appeal to “warring parties across the world to lay down their weapons in support of the bigger battle against COVID-19: the common enemy that is now threatening all of humankind.” The Holy Father, Pope Francis, echoed Mr. Guterres calling on all parties to stop all forms of war and hostility.

Responding to these calls, in April 2020, New Humanity appealed to the leaders of Western nations to suspend the embargo on Syria so they could purchase the medical supplies needed to combat COVID-19. While the embargo has exceptions for humanitarian aid, many banks and businesses have avoided doing business with Syria for fear that Western governments would find cause to penalize them for violating the embargo. In its appeal, New Humanity included other countries impeded from obtaining medical supplies due to sanctions and conflicts. New Humanity continues to support the calls by Mr. Antonio Guterres and the Holy Father.

Grassroots Activities

In Brazil, a consortium of NGOs including New Humanity mobilized a health campaign for the population of the Amazon as an expression of concrete fraternity, through the “Barco Hospital Papa Francisco.” The Barco Hospital Papa Francisco is taking care of disadvantaged people who live on the banks of the Amazon River, providing food, assistance, and healthcare. They hope to find a way to offer vaccination.

Thanks to the contribution of many members and friends of New Humanity and the Focolare Movement, 3500 Amazonian people are helped regularly; 130 tons of non-perishable food donated; 3 tons of fresh food; 30 tons of hygienic and cleaning materials; 30,000 lunches and 10,000 fabric masks have been distributed.

In Japan, the NGOs New Humanity and the Focolare Movement with Religions for Peace have begun a program to prevent suicides which increased 80% during pandemic. The program provides consultations with psychologists, participation in art workshops, and provides support network for at-risk people. New Humanity calls on governments to increase funding for suicide prevention programs.

In the United States of America, the staff of the Focolare Movement’s Living City Magazine and New City Press, created a series of videos, webinars, and interviews with the hashtag #DareToCare, to inspire and encourage everyone to get in touch with neighbors during these challenging times. They asked people to share in a 1 to 2-minute video how they “dare to care.” New Humanity urges governments to stimulate community organizations, faith-based organizations, and civic organizations to foster a strong sense of caring and fraternity among their members and non-members and to reach out to people who might otherwise find themselves alone during this time of lockdowns and quarantines.

In India, young people of New Humanity and the Focolare Movement together with members of Shanti Ashram sought to serve the underprivileged whose plight had worsened making it difficult for them to procure even one proper meal a day. They began cooking meals once or twice a week and distributed about 100 food packages to the people even those living under the bridges. Others have begun to join them.

In Nepal, the lockdown withdrew the main source of their income which is tourism. The youth of New Humanity and the Focolare Movement raised funds locally as well as from members in different parts of the world. They used the funds to support families who were struggling.

New Humanity is also working with FAO for the Zero Hunger project which is an essential priority right now. Some communities in Africa, especially in Madagascar and Benin, have been successfully experimenting with traditional medicine. Not discarding their contribution in the process of identifying a treatment is a point on which to reflect.

New Humanity calls on the United Nations through the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the International Labor Organization (ILO) to implement those initiatives aimed at guaranteeing decent work like training courses for entrepreneurship and cultivation of the land without falling into pure welfarism.

Bringing relief to the most vulnerable people in society in ways such as those described here builds fraternity within communities with current and long-lasting benefits. Faith-based, civic, and community-based organizations have much to contribute while the government provides the socio-economic safety net needed to carry people through unprecedented strains on their ability to survive.
