Declaration on Global Vaccine Equity

We worship a God whose character is equity and who intends the well-being of all people.
Therefore, advocating for vaccine equity should be seen as a part of the mission of the Church.
Bishop Joaquina Nhanala, Mozambique

We, participants in the Global Consultation on Vaccine Equity held virtually on May 4, 2021 by the International Association of Methodist Schools, Colleges, and Universities (IAMSCU), the Ecumenical Consultation on Protocols for Worship, Fellowship, and Sacrament, Candler School of Theology at Emory University, and the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry of The United Methodist Church, publicly declare our position regarding the need for a worldwide equitable distribution and accessibility of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Our Consensus

As educational, public health, and church leaders from diverse nations around the world, we reached consensus in support of a call for equitable, worldwide development of and access to vaccines and effective treatments for COVID-19.

We affirm the sacredness of life demonstrated by Jesus Christ when he healed the sick and cleansed lepers, upheld by John Wesley in his dissemination of medical knowledge, supported by ecumenical initiatives espousing the integrity of life, and expressed in multiple religions through their cultural, theological, and liturgical traditions.

We respect the crucial role of science and scientists in promoting the well-being of people worldwide, and we uphold the role of education in addressing the COVID-19 global crisis by seeking truth and countering falsehoods.

We acknowledge the challenges of promoting public health in many countries where systems are broken, hospitals are overrun, and socio-economic disparities are coupled with fear of the unknown.

We understand health care as a fundamental human right, including vaccine accessibility to combat diseases affecting millions of people worldwide, and we recognize that we continue to be at risk from mutations of COVID-19 until all people are vaccinated.

We applaud and support visionary leaders, healthcare professionals, and essential workers who maintain accessibility to health care, information, food, and safe shelter during this pandemic.

Finally, we recognize IAMSCU as a vibrant international network of educational institutions in the Wesleyan and Methodist traditions that represents a diversity of regions, languages and cultures, and that connects us in a common purpose of preparing our communities and societies for the future.

Our Global Call to Action

On behalf of a global network of more than one thousand institutions related to the International Association of Methodist-related Schools, Colleges, and Universities (IAMSCU) in eighty countries and five continents and in partnership with the Methodist network of disaster response and health clinics, we resolve to provide key resources, including reliable scientific information, and to expedite equitable distribution and accessibility of the COVID-19 vaccine worldwide.

Understanding health care, vaccine equity, and abundant life to be fundamental human rights for human flourishing worldwide, we commit ourselves to the following actions:

- To engage educational institutions, churches, and communities in educating people about the human right to health, the ethics of accessibility to healthcare, and the equity of vaccination processes in their local communities and around the world;
- To acknowledge and respect contextual differences, including cultural, ethnic, and linguistic diversity as well as social and economic conditions as we chart constructive ways to contribute to vaccine equity;
- To challenge governments, businesses, and media outlets to respond to the social needs of their communities and to take actions that will promote wellbeing, address economic stress, and generate social improvement of all people, especially in impoverished and vulnerable communities;
- To call upon governments, pharmaceutical companies, institutions, and citizens of the world's major economies to share knowledge, release patents, facilitate production processes, distribute vaccines, and work cooperatively with other nations on creative solutions to logistical, political, administrative, and diplomatic obstacles to global vaccine equity;
- To urge political, economic, religious and philanthropic leaders to take immediate actions concerning donations, resource-sharing, information exchange, and other initiatives necessary to overcome this global health crisis;
- To combat disinformation by educating people about COVID-19 and its variants, promoting global vaccine equity, and working in partnership with relevant institutions in these activities; and
- To join with other organizations and people of good will in enhancing the common good by promoting these actions for the sake of human flourishing.

Conclusion

A global pandemic crisis calls for global action and a high degree of trust and collaboration among governments and among international leaders of religious, philanthropic, educational, and public health communities. As institutions and organizations in the Wesleyan and Methodist traditions, we will support vaccination programs and public health education in the various locations where our expertise, trusted relationships, and resources are already established. We will leverage our influence by bringing our global partners to the task and by supporting our educational institutions and health facilities in their implementation of the actions called for in this Declaration.

Global Consultation on Vaccine Equity
May 4, 2021

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