

Tel. direct: +41 22 791 3574  
E-mail : [dunetonp@who.int](mailto:dunetonp@who.int)

H.E. Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus  
Director General  
World Health Organization  
Avenue Appia 20  
1202 Geneva

Geneva, 25 March 2020

Dear Dr Tedros,

As it becomes clear that the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic will affect millions of people around the globe, it is also increasingly evident that it will disproportionately touch the most vulnerable. During these extraordinary times, the global health community must stand together to find solutions, and pay special attention to protect vulnerable populations, especially those in countries with weaker health systems, who are likely to bear the brunt of this pandemic.

We are witnessing an unprecedented global response. The G-20 will hold a virtual Leaders Summit to advance a coordinated global response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of the G-20 Governments and Foundations have committed significant resources, including to support much needed research and development with the aim of accelerating the development of new and critical tools. We applaud WHO's leadership in coordinating the global response.

As a global partner engaged in finding innovative solutions, Unitaid is considering investing in improving access to COVID-19 diagnosis, potential treatment and prevention. In close coordination with WHO and other partners, we plan to fund specific actions to enhance access to tests and to potential new medicines and technologies.

A key concern remains that access to the most effective products and technologies may not be equitable; the most vulnerable populations risk to face significant challenges with regard to availability and affordability of the products that can protect them from this disease or treat those already sick. We believe that this issue should also be on the agenda of the leaders of the G20.

As you know, Unitaid has been working on access to innovative health products, in particular for HIV, TB, malaria and hepatitis C. One of Unitaid's novel approaches has been the establishment and funding of the Medicines Patent Pool, to negotiate voluntary licences for HIV, TB and hepatitis C medicines with individual companies. Through a collaborative approach with originator companies and the generic industry, the Medicines Patent Pool has facilitated the supply of more than 26 million patient years of treatment to people in low- and middle-income countries.

We appreciate that several initiatives are underway or proposed that seek to address access barriers; this includes but is not limited to the proposal that has been sent to you by the President of Costa Rica about a voluntary pool of patents for Covid-19 related medicines and technology.

---

**[WWW.UNITAID.ORG](http://WWW.UNITAID.ORG)**

UNITAID – GLOBAL HEALTH CAMPUS, CHEMIN DU POMMIER 40, 5<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR, 1218 GRAND-SACONNEX, GENEVA, SWITZERLAND



UNITAID IS A HOSTED PARTNERSHIP OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

We look forward to hearing from you on how Unitaid can work with WHO, the Medicines Patent Pool and other partners on identifying concrete steps to ensure that there will be equitable and timely access to critical health technologies and products for COVID-19 for people anywhere in the world.

With best regards,



Marisol Touraine  
Chair  
Unitaid Executive Board



Dr Philippe Duneton  
Executive Director a.i  
Unitaid