

April 20, 2022

Open Letter to President Abinader
To: H.E. Luis Abinader, President
The Dominican Republic

Timely access to effective diagnostics, treatments, and vaccines will be key to ending the COVID-19 pandemic and saving lives. That is why we, the undersigned, are writing to express our support for efforts to increase access to affordable COVID-19 health commodities in your country and throughout the global South.

We strongly endorse the petition for a compulsory license for nirmatrelvir/ritonavir (Paxlovid), an antiviral treatment that can be cheaply produced and scaled up by a wide base of generic manufacturers. That petition was filed by Knowledge Ecology International (KEI) and is currently pending at the National Industrial Property Office (ONAPI). It is expected to be decided in the upcoming weeks.

Pfizer's objection to the petition for a compulsory license is disturbing and baseless—they allege their intellectual property is a "human right," and deny that nirmatrelvir/ritonavir is an essential treatment. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Currently, Pfizer's monopoly grip on nirmatrelvir/ritonavir means they are the sole controller of price and supply. Their voluntary licensing deal excludes the Dominican Republic—and Pfizer is expected to charge the Dominican people as much as the market will bear.

These strategies will only prolong the pandemic, devastating communities and undermining the national and regional economy.

Compulsory licensing is part of globally recognized public health flexibilities that ensure intellectual property rights do not undermine the fundamental human right to access to medicines for all. ONAPI has the authority and duty to protect the fundamental human right to access to medicines and public interest in the Dominican Republic by granting the petition.

And as your administration has pointed out, greater access to COVID-19 technologies that are nationally and regionally manufactured at affordable prices is critical to defeating the pandemics of today and preventing the pandemics of tomorrow.

As the first-line of treatment against COVID-19, timely access to nirmatrelvir/ritonavir is necessary to protect the right to the highest possible standard of health and the public interest in the Dominican Republic. Article 46 of Law 20-00 in the Dominican Republic gives ONAPI the authority to grant compulsory licenses to protect the public interest. These

types of provisions were designed to be used in circumstances like the COVID-19 pandemic, as many governments, academics, and experts around the world have recognized.

We stand with the Dominican Republic and urge your administration to support this essential public health measure.

Sincerely,

Centro de Orientación e Investigación Integral (COIN)
Global Humanitarian Progress Corporation (GHP Corp) Colombia
Health GAP
Public Citizen
People's Vaccine Alliance
Access to Medicines Ireland
ACHCU
Adrian Dominican Sisters, Portfolio Advisory Board
African Services Committee
ALAMES-Margarita Posada
ALAMES-MP El Salvador
Amnesty International
Asociación Construyendo Caminos de Esperanza frente a la Injusticia el Rechazo y el Olvido (CCEFIRO)
Asociación de Empleados Universitarios ASODEMU
Asociación de Mujeres Gente Nueva (AMUGEN)
Asociación de Mujeres TS Liquidambar
Asociación de trabajadoras Sexuales "Miluska Vida y Dignidad"
Asociación Latinoamericana de Medicina SocialAMES
Asociación MANU-Costa Rica
Asociación para la Prevención y Estudio del VIH/Sida (APEVIHS) Guatemala
Association for Proper Internet Governance
Be a Hero
Brazilian Interdisciplinary Aids Association (ABIA)
Centro de Promoción y Educación Profesional Vasco de Quiroga
Club 16 de Agosto
Colectivo Flor de Azales
Corporacion Innovarte
Covhida
El logro de Volver a Vivir
Equidad de Género: Ciudadanía, Trabajo y Familia
Federation of Democratic Labour Unions
Friends Fiduciary
Foundation for Integrative AIDS Research (FIAR)
Frente de Empleados Progresistas Universitarios (FEPU)

Fundación Aprendiendo a Vivir Inc.
Fundación Arcoíris por el respeto a la diversidad sexual
Fundación Convivir ce
Fundacion para Estudio e investigación de ka mujer
Fundación FUNDINVE
Fundación IFARMA
Fundación Misión Salud
FUNDASIDA
GABS u LTD
GESTOS – Soropositividade, Comunicação e Gênero
Global Justice Now
Health Justice Initiative (HJI), South Africa
Health Poverty Action
Hospital Nacional de la Mujer
Housing Works
Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR)
Impertec Dominicana
Instituto Latinoamericano para La Paz y la Ciudadania (ILAPYC)
Internacional de los Servicios Públicos – ISP/Interamericas
International Treatment Preparedness Coalition (ITPC)
ITPC-LATCA
ITPC LATCA Perú
Jokeidi Sosa
Just Treatment
Justice is Global
Maryknoll Sisters
Mauritius Trade Union Congress
Mercy Investment Services, Inc.
Metro New York Health Care for All
Missionary Society of St. Columban
Movimiento Mexicano de Ciudadanía Positiva, A.C.
New York Trade Justice Coalition
Northwest Coalition for Responsible Investment
Observatorio de Derechos Humanos de Personas Trans (ODHPT)
Observatorio Iberoamericano de Propiedad Intelectual -OBIFI-
OTRANS-RN, REDLACTRANS y Coalicion de Activistas LGBTTTI y Trabajo Sexual dd Incidencia
en las Americas
Pacientes Alto Costo
Partners In Health
Pax Christi International
PLAPERTS
Project Organising Development Education and Research (PODER)
Proyecto sobre Organización, Desarrollo, Educación e Investigación (PODER)

Public Eye (Switzerland)
R2H Action (Right to Health)
Red HGB Bolivia
Red de Investigadores sobre Factores Psicosociales en el Trabajo
Red LOMSODES
Red PVVS Uruguay
Red uruguaya de pvvs REDLA+
REDCA+
Rednajcer
REDOVIH
Rethink Trade
Rise and Resist
Salud y Farmacos
Salud por Derecho
SECTION27
Seventh Generation Interfaith Coalition for Responsible Investment
Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación Dominicana
Sindicato dos Psicólogos no Estado de São Paulo
Sindicato único de la salud Aragua Venezuela
Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth
Southern and East African Trade Institute (SEATINI) South Africa
STOPAIDS
T1International
The Center for Artistic Activism
Third World Network
Trade Justice Education Fund
TRANSSA-Trans Siempre Amigas
Treatment Action Group
Trinity Health
Universidades Aliadas por los Medicamento Esenciales (UAEM América Latina)
Universitarios por La Diversidad (UNIDI Inc.)
Universities Allied for Essential Medicines (UAEM)
Voluntariado GLBT Dominicano