

# CSHL NEWSLETTER

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## COVID-19 Vaccine Equity

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought the globe into trouble, especially the existence of inequality in many developing countries in shielding vulnerable people from such diseases.[1] Here, Vaccine Equity refers to the equality that everyone could access to the vaccine, the inequitable vaccine delivery has put lots of people at risk of virus and enabled the infection to the world.[2] Since about 24th November 2021, there have been 259,502,031 Covid-19 reported cases worldwide, with 5,183,003 fatalities, and a total of 7,702,859,718 vaccine doses has been provided, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).[3] This crisis has brought attention to the importance of everyone's right to health, including access to high-quality health care regardless of age, gender, nationality, socio-economic or ethnic background.[4] Since the coronavirus contagious could spread rapidly, the vaccine plays a crucial role in building the immune system and minimizing the risk of infecting.[5]

However, 194 of the 220 countries and economies have begun vaccination, whereas 26 have not; [6] the global distribution of vaccines has been heavily biased toward higher-income countries and shown the gap of vaccine equity, whereby more than 87 percent of vaccines have been distributed to high-income or upper-middle-income countries, and only 0.2 percent going to low-income countries. [7] COVAX is known as leading by three organizations such as CEPI, GAVI, and WHO, established to make vaccinations more accessible to low- and middle-income countries by pooling risk and procurement, has the responsibility to ensure the right to health and cutting down on the relevant concerns.[8] In Cambodia, there are 13 million people who got the Covid-19 vaccination; however, Cambodia was one of the few nations to administer the vaccine to children aged 6 to 12.[9] In Uganda, the government paid three times more than Europe for the AstraZeneca vaccine.[10] In the UK, the government opened consultations on mandatory vaccination for frontline health, social care staff, and created a policy in which staff made an agreement to be vaccinated to persist the work. [11] In Human Rights Law "Compulsory Vaccination" is an intervention with the human right of bodily integrity, which is a part of private life, yet does not mean it is illegal.[12]

According to article 12(2)(c) of ICESCR stated that everyone shall enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health by treatment and control of epidemic, endemic, occupational and other diseases and the prevention by the state parties.[13] In Cambodia, since the Covid-19 outbreak, the government has prepared for emergency law and adopted six chapters and 18 articles of Covid-19 law with the sentencing and penalty in order to maintain and protect public health to protect citizens.[14] All States are obligated to protect citizens and should not overlook the important role of vaccination because neither would be safe until all are safe.

[1] Amnesty International, Inequality and Austerity: Our Weak Links in Countering COVID-19, (18 May 2020), available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/05/inequality-and-austerityweak-links-in-countering-covid19/>

[2] United Nations, COVID vaccines: Widening inequality and millions vulnerable, (19 September 2021), available at: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/09/1100192>

[3] World Health Organization (WHO), WHO Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard, 2021, available at: <https://covid19.who.int/>

[4] Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights (OCHR), The Right to Health, p.1, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/documents/publications/factsheet31.pdf>

[5] WHO, COVID-19 advice for the public: Getting vaccinated, (5 November 2021), available at: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/covid-19-vaccines/advice>

[6] WHO, Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID-19, (9 April 2021), available at: <https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19-9-april-2021>

[7] Human Rights Watch, COVAX: Enhance Transparency, Share Intellectual Property, (6 May 2021), available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/05/06/covax-enhance-transparency-share-intellectual-property>

[8] Id.

[9] Human Rights Watch, Cambodia: Vaccine Mandates Raise Rights Concerns, (26 October 2021), available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/10/26/cambodia-vaccine-mandates-raise-rights-concerns>

[10] The Guardian, The world's poorest countries are at India's mercy for vaccines. It's unsustainable Achal Prabhala and Leena Menghaney, (2 April 2021), available at: <https://bit.ly/3GiUlXo>

[11] The Conversation, Compulsory vaccination: what does human rights law say, (14 September 2021), available at: <https://theconversation.com/compulsory-vaccination-what-does-human-rights-law-say-167735>

[12] Id.

[13] ICESCR, Article 12(2)(c).

[14] Phnom Penh Post, Law on Covid-19 control takes effect, (11 March 2021), available at: <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/national/law-covid-19-control-takes-effect>

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