

WTO to begin negotiations on COVID vaccine patent waivers -- long after they were proposed



Rich nations are hoarding vaccines, leaving the poor without. (Photo: AFP)

Geneva, June 10 (RHC)= World Trade Organization members have agreed to begin negotiations next week on a temporary waiver of intellectual property rights for coronavirus vaccines. South Africa and

India first proposed the patent waivers in October of 2020 as part of an urgent effort to increase the availability of vaccines in poorer countries.

The effort has languished for more than eight months amid opposition from pharmaceutical companies and wealthy WTO members. Since then, the world has recorded over 2.6 million COVID deaths and 140 million new infections.

On Wednesday, Argentinean President Alberto Fernández and Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez said in a joint news conference that they support a waiver for COVID vaccine patents. Prime Minister Sánchez told reporters: “Argentina and Spain are defending the liberation of vaccines, making them a global public good and, consequently, speeding up their distribution and increasing their production capacity for the whole of humanity to vaccinate all of our societies as quickly as possible and overcome this calamity that COVID-19 represents.”

The Biden administration initially opposed patent waivers for COVID vaccines, then reversed course in May amid intense pressure from advocacy groups and some Democrats. The European Union and several nations, including the U.K. and Switzerland, remain opposed.

<https://www.radiohc.cu/en/noticias/internacionales/260299-wto-to-begin-negotiations-on-covid-vaccine-patent-waivers-long-after-they-were-proposed>



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