

Mr Gurría, let the OECD buy the anti-COVID 19 vaccine patents. And give them to all poor countries. Now!

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Open letter by Mr. Beppe Grillo to Mr. Ángel Gurría, Secretary General of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Dear Secretary-General of the OECD, Mr. Ángel Gurría,

Five people die from the COVID-19 virus every minute in the world because they are not vaccinated. Private ownership of vaccine patents prevents their universal distribution.

Albert Sabin, inventor of the world's most dramatically effective vaccine, wrote fifty years ago: "Many people insisted that I patent my polio vaccine, but I didn't want to. It is my gift to all the children of the world. (...) A virus specialist has a duty to use his knowledge for the good of mankind."

With his polio vaccine, Albert Sabin didn't make any money. He made history!

Mr. Gurría, you too could make history. The 37 countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, which you chair, are among the richest on the planet. They account for 63% of the world GDP.

Mr. Gurria, please, act now: Ask the heads of the 37 OECD countries to raise a #HumanTax to be devolved to the World Bank to acquire the patents of all effective COVID-19 vaccines. All obstacles which might prevent the widest

possible vaccination campaign must be removed.

As an organization of rich countries, let the OECD acquire the COVID-19 vaccine patents at market price to donate them to the world's poorest countries.

The COVID-19 pandemic cannot be eliminated by vaccinating only the world's richest populations.

If the poorest countries become a virus reservoir, then the health of populations in the entire world economy will be undermined once more, and our current vaccination efforts will be compromised.

Private companies exist to promote their own good, not the common good. Right or wrong, this is capitalism.

But governments and institutions like the OECD instead exist to promote the common good. Right or wrong, this is democracy.

Fair taxes finance the common good. Fair progressive taxes are paid by citizens and businesses according to their ability to pay, especially in the worst of times, such as during pandemics and wars.

Faced with the seemingly unstoppable tragedy of the pandemic, the most economical, as well as the most humane, reaction is for the greater wealth to contribute more to stabilize the world economy. This will prove to their very own interest.

Indeed, Mr. Gurria, buying a fire extinguisher is much cheaper than buying a fire truck. The extinguishers of the global pandemic today are the vaccines. If we don't act today with the fire extinguisher, we will need the fire brigade tomorrow.

According to me, nothing today could be more effective than this global virus initiative at improving Cooperation and Development, the very meaning of the word OECD.

Who will make History in this pandemic? If not you, Mr.

Gurría, then who? If not now, when?



Beppe Grillo, 23 March 2021

Founder of the Five-star Movement, the leading party in the Italian coalition government of PM Mario Draghi and in parliament.

P.S.: Mr. Gurría, please allow me to suggest taking a minute look at my sketch in honour of Albert Sabin and about vaccines as a common good: "Once scientists were like Albert Sabin. Sabin invented the best polio vaccine. They said to him: "Shall we patent it? He could become a billionaire. He said, "How long does it take to patent it?" "Fifteen days." "Some children might die, for God's sake, let's donate it to humanity." He died last March (1993), we didn't even notice. This is how we treat a giant of medicine and history."

25 November 1993, Italian public TV RAI Uno, at 21 hour, with 13 millions spectators.

OTHER LANGUAGES

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