



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

10 December 2020

Excellency,

As the world continues to respond to the crisis stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic, the United Nations remains steadfast in its determination to continue to assist the most vulnerable across the globe.

My senior leadership team and I have never been more cognizant of the threat to our personnel both at Headquarters and in the field, upon whom we rely to deliver the mandates of the United Nations to Member States and to their societies in the most challenging of circumstances. Throughout the pandemic, our operations have been guided by several key objectives: supporting national authorities to help protect vulnerable communities and to continue to deliver on critical mandates; supporting countries to contain and mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 virus and the associated socioeconomic consequences of the pandemic; and protecting our personnel and their capacity to continue to support critical operations.

I, therefore, seek your commitment to ensure that United Nations personnel and their families serving within your borders, are included in your national planning for immunization.

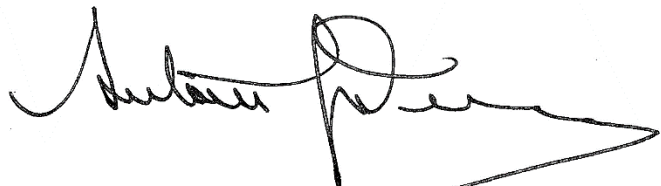
As the availability and distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine evolve and we work together to find the best solutions towards our common objective of vaccinating the global population, it will be critical to reduce mortality by ensuring the protection of health-care systems and the safety of the most vulnerable groups. As part of our collective responsibility, we must ensure the initial distribution of the vaccines to all high priority groups within countries, particularly those who operate in high to very high risk environments, such as health-care and other essential front-line workers; older adults defined by age-based risk specific to country/region; and individuals with underlying medical conditions. As supplies of the vaccines become more readily available, so will the possibilities to vaccinate additional segments of populations.

All Permanent Representatives of Member States
of the United Nations
New York

The United Nations has also begun engagement with the COVAX Facility, established by the vaccine pillar of the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator to ensure the fair allocation and equitable access of eventual COVID-19 vaccines among all countries. This Facility aims to rapidly provide equitable global access to a safe and effective vaccine to all subscribing countries and has been developed under the leadership of Gavi (the Vaccine Alliance), the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, the World Health Organization and other global partners. The COVAX Facility brings all participating countries together, regardless of their economic means, for the pooled procurement and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines. Member States that are able to provide the necessary financial support to the COVAX Facility are strongly encouraged to do so.

I am encouraged and reassured by our collective efforts to respond to the pandemic and wish to renew my appeal to all to stay the course and demonstrate our shared determination, solidarity and unwavering commitment to advance peace, security and development.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



António Guterres