

Vaccine inequity and Rural health

Vaccine inequity is the world's biggest obstacle to ending the current pandemic and recovering from COVID-19. For Low and middle income countries the Covid pandemic has had a cascading effect on the economy, and been detrimental to the existing poor social determinants of health and non-Covid care.

Viruses don't limit themselves to boundaries or socioeconomic status but rather, make everyone vulnerable, however those in rural areas, the less privileged and those with poor access to primary healthcare are at much higher risk of complications

If we want to mitigate and control the pandemic, we must honestly reflect and act together towards the availability of WHO approved vaccines and any "vaccine passport" must recognise these and not impose further global discrimination which limits people mobility

Vaccine stockpiling and rolling out of booster vaccinations when people in LMICs and in rural communities remain unvaccinated is disastrous for global health.

We ask our political and health leaders to realise there is a crisis.

Viruses have a natural tendency to mutate more if people remain unvaccinated and new variants will make even those vaccinated less safe. No one will ever be 'truly safe' until everyone is safe.

Rich countries are projected to vaccinate at a faster pace and also rapidly recover economically from COVID-19, while poorer countries have not yet completely vaccinated even their health workers and most at-risk populations and these countries may also not achieve pre-COVID-19 levels of growth until 2024. Ironically, those who need the most, receive the least.

Efforts should be made to remove barriers to accessing vaccines for rural people and low & middle income countries globally.

We call for the provision of financial support for vaccine manufacture and distribution and to vaccinate all those who need it the most.

Family doctors and frontline workers must be fully vaccinated as soon as possible, the rural health workforce is already under pressure, without vaccination these vital services will fail.

The world's health is at stake and it is a global moral responsibility to protect the most vulnerable and minimise preventable deaths happening in any part of the world.

We remind global leaders of their commitment to the Astana declaration on Primary healthcare and call for International solidarity and cooperation to ensure equitable access to vaccines & other lifesaving health resources to win over this pandemic and achieve 'Health for all'.