



Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP  
Prime Minister

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14 December 2021

Dear Prime Minister

I am writing following sight of the letter sent to you by the Rt Hon Nicola Sturgeon MSP dated 8 December, which in light of the new developments within the pandemic, stressed the importance of the vaccination of developing world populations, called for the UK Government to provide further assistance in terms of donated vaccines and support a temporary TRIPS waiver.

These truly are exceptional times. Inequalities across the world have very much been exposed by the pandemic. Without access to the protective vaccines, the developing world is struggling to protect their populations from the impact of the virus.

We are extremely fortunate in our developed world. In Wales over 5,731,409 doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered, including over 40% of the population receiving a booster dose. Whilst a very high percentage of our population has received some form of protection, other countries of the world are not so lucky. This virus does not respect borders, we are not safe until everyone is safe. A global solution is required, otherwise the emergence of new variants will become even more commonplace, and the virus will continue to escape our grasp.

Through our Wales and Africa programme the Welsh Government has donated a substantial amount of surplus PPE equipment to Namibia to help them in the fight against COVID-19. The kit included over 1.1m face masks, 300,000 Lateral Flow Tests, 500,000 gowns, 100,000 protective aprons and over £1m worth of hand sanitiser. Over the last 2 years, the Welsh Government has made available an extra £2.5 million for Welsh organisations to work in partnership with many countries in Africa to fight against COVID-19.

In total, we have invested nearly £3 million in COVID-19 response and adaptation projects in Sub Saharan Africa. This support is providing vital oxygen supplies in hospitals, training nurses in using that oxygen, helping children get back to school; it is providing clean water and soap stations, and essential PPE. It is important that we do all we can to assist

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

developing nations and look for opportunities to provide them with the tools to help themselves through this pandemic.

I fully support the UK Government's close engagement with the World Health Organisation, the G7 and international partners such as CEPI and Gavi, the Vaccines Alliance, to ensure developing countries can access COVID-19 vaccines, treatments and tests. It is also pleasing to see the efforts and donations made to COVAX to fund vaccines for lower income countries, in particular the pledge to donate at least 100 million surplus coronavirus vaccine doses within the next year to the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access initiative. We very much support these actions in donating to this very worthy initiative, but believe more could be done. As outlined in the letter from the First Minister of Scotland, not enough of the world is covered by the essential protection these life-saving vaccines afford and every effort should be made to address this concern.

I would also echo the sentiments of the Scottish First Minister in urging the UK Government join the other 100 plus WTO countries who support a temporary waiver under the TRIPS agreement, to relax Intellectual Property rights. This will enable patented vaccines to be made available to these low-income countries to manage health and economic pressures caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and help these countries help themselves. Unless actions such as these are taken, some experts predict that it could be at least 2024 before this global pandemic is brought under control.

At the outset of the pandemic the UN General Assembly stressed the need for cooperation in countering the virus. Amnesty International has called on governments to 'recognise their human rights obligations and ensure those most in need of life saving vaccines are not left behind'.

I urge the UK Government to take this further action to make a significant contribution to the global fight against Covid-19, in the hope that one day all countries of the world, including the most vulnerable, are in a position to overcome the ill-effects of the virus. It is in our national interest to do so.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Drakeford". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**MARK DRAKEFORD**