

H.E. Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus

Director General
World Health Organization
Avenue Appia 20
1202 Geneva

1 March 2021

Dear Dr Tedros,

On behalf of the International Disability Alliance and the International Disability and Development Consortium, we wish to express our deepest appreciation for all the measures taken throughout the last year by the World Health Organization to protect persons with disabilities from the direct and indirect impact of the global COVID-19 outbreak. We are particularly grateful for the steps taken toward enhancing accessibility of COVID-19 information shared by the World Health Organization and the publication of the briefing 'Disability considerations during the COVID-19 outbreak' which is a great resource for persons with disabilities, their representative organizations and other stakeholders.

With the roll out and distribution of COVID-19 vaccinations, the world is facing another historic moment to test existing commitments to equity, equality and universal health care. **Persons with disabilities legitimately expect global leaders to consider them and their support persons as one of the high priority groups for vaccination; persons with disabilities also expect all necessary measures to be taken to ensure that the information, venues and processes related to vaccinations are inclusive of and accessible to them on the basis of free and informed consent.**

We attach to this letter our Call to Action on these issues, asking for:

- **Global and national vaccination plans to prioritize reaching persons with disabilities**, particularly persons with intellectual disabilities and high support needs, persons living in congregate settings, older persons and persons with health conditions that put them most at risk.
- **Health information campaigns and vaccination delivery sites to be inclusive and accessible** to all persons with disabilities. For example, information related to vaccination must be provided in all accessible formats including captioning, sign language, audio formats, and plain language.

- **Organisations of persons with disabilities to be meaningfully involved** in the development of COVID-19-related planning and policymaking, and vaccinations must only happen with free and informed consent.
- **Data collected on vaccination programs to be disaggregated by age, gender and disability** using internationally comparable tools and shared in accessible formats.

To further your consistent and genuine commitment to disability inclusion we ask you to issue a clear public statement urging all those responsible for COVID-19 vaccination programmes to prioritize persons with disabilities. We hope that through our joint efforts, persons with disabilities will experience an inclusive and accessible COVID-19 vaccination.

We are committed to continue our work with you to support, shape and amplify further World Health Organization guidance so that it strengthens its consideration of persons with disabilities. We firmly believe that this is an achievable goal and remain available to provide any assistance for this purpose.

Sincerely,



Ana Lucia Arellano
President
International Disability Alliance



Dominic Haslam
Chair
International Disability and Development
Consortium