



To H.E Volkan Bozkir

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Letter to the President of the UN General Assembly

Subject: Spontaneous contribution to the debates of the 37th UN Special Session on Covid-19

Mr. President

Our association, Agora des Habitants de la Terre (AHT), which is active in some fifteen countries on different continents, would like to thank you for your personal efforts to successfully obtain the convening of the Special Session dedicated to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The main aim of our association is to contribute to the promotion of a Humanity capable of safeguarding, caring for and promoting the universal rights to life for all the inhabitants of the Earth (all living species included), for the benefit also of future generations. To this end, our activities are focused on the defence and promotion of global public goods and services, in particular, water, health and knowledge.

We share your conviction that the holding of the Special Session at the level of Heads of State and Government is of considerable importance. It constitutes a unique opportunity to define and implement joint actions at the global level to fight the pandemic to ensure the right to life and health of all the inhabitants of the Earth. As you write in your letter of convocation: "*Let us not forget that none of us are safe, until we are all safe*".

This is a historic moment. The future of the United Nations is at stake, and above all the capacity of our societies to make life universally free from any subordination to "reasons" of market, economy or power. Health and life are not a question of business, profit, national power, domination or survival of the strongest.

This Special Session is also very important because it represents a great occasion for us citizens. The work on the agenda for December 4 encourages us to express our priorities and wishes, to put pressure on our elected leaders so that their decisions are in line with the constitutional principles of our States and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Rights of Peoples.

As Agora of the Inhabitants of the Earth, we previously intervened in September with the Secretary-General of the United Nations in defence of a health policy without private patents for profit and free of charge (under public political and financial responsibility).

We deeply deplore the fact that on October 23, at the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the "rich" countries of the North (United States, European Union, Norway, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Australia, Japan...) made the mistake of rejecting the request made by South Africa and India, supported by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and other countries of the South, to temporarily suspend the application of patent rules in the fight against Covid-19.

With this rejection, the aforementioned countries have flouted the political and legal primacy of the right to health according to the rules and objectives set at international level by WHO over the "logics" and market interests promoted by WTO.

This is unacceptable. The high-income social strata have become richer since May while the low- and middle-income groups have become poorer. The president of Pfizer alone earned 5.6 million US dollars in one day by selling 62% of his company shares in his personal capacity!

The most recent figures published by the World Bank and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) confirm the widening gap between rich and poor. People in the poor countries of the Earth are already suffering and will suffer even more in the coming decade than people in the rich countries from the consequences of the pandemic. Why do public authorities continue to finance companies with billions of dollars to produce and distribute vaccines, the current world market for which is estimated at 45 billion dollars?

It is time for governments to regain control of health policy.

The Special Session must set the record straight. Health is not a commodity, and the trade aspects must clearly be subject to the imperatives of universal human rights and safety of life. We are convinced that world public opinion will welcome such a stance. To do otherwise risks further weakening confidence in UN institutions.

Our proposals are detailed in the attached note "For the global health policy, res publica".

It seems to us that the Special Session will have the task of defining and approving the main lines of a Pact for a just, participatory, federative, solidarity-based global public health policy. This policy must be freed from private monopolies on intellectual property, from dependence on corporate financial interests and from technocratic visions of management. Our proposals are small pieces that can be used to make up the mosaic of the Pact.

We are particularly keen to point out that our proposals were the subject of a consultation with associations, groups, movements and citizen networks during the month of November. We have received 1,285 signed personal emails of support from 53 countries, a list of which is also annexed.

Mr. President,

we have tried to be active citizens, responding to the stimuli of the UN, with contributions of ideas, choices and commitments.

We thank you in advance for your attention and ask you to please accept the expression of our highest consideration.

For Agora of the Inhabitants of the Earth, the members of the International Committee of Promoters:

Alain Adriaens (B), Marcos P. Arruda (BR), Alassane Ba (F), Guido Barbera (I), Marcelo Barros (BR), Cristina Bertelli (F), Jacques Brodeur (CND), Joao Caraça (PT), Sergio and Clara Castioni (I), Francesco Comina (I), Alain Dangoisse (B- India), Ina Darmstaedter (D), Armando De Negri (BR), Corinne Ducrey (F), Anibal Faccendini (ARG), Adriana Fernandez (CL), Alfio Foti (I), Lilia Ghanem (Lebanon), Pierre Galand (B), Luis Infanti de la Mora (CL), Pierre Jasmin (CND), Fatoumata Ki-Zerbo (Burkina Faso), Paola Libanti (I), Vladimir Mitev (BG), Maria Palatine (D), Nicola Perrone (I), Riccardo Petrella (B), Pietro Pizzuti (B), Jean-Yves Proulx (CND), Luiz Rena (BR), Domenico Rizzuti

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Enclosures

- 1. Note “For the Global Health Policy, *Res Publica*”**
- 2. List of signed personal emails of support from 53 countries**