



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

20th March 2022

See Confidential

RE: COVID-19 VACCINES IP

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of the proposal of India and South Africa for a waiver of the provisions of the Agreement on the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement) as they relate to COVID-19 vaccines.

HM Government's top priority throughout the pandemic has been to save lives. Ministers firmly believe that the best way to do this is to support the world's leading scientists to develop our most important weapon in the fight against COVID-19: vaccines. Our robust international intellectual property (IP) framework protects the ability of these pioneering minds to come up with new ideas and innovations. It has, and will continue to, allow us to develop vaccines and treatments at unprecedented pace and meet the ultimate goal of saving lives.

There is no evidence that an IP waiver would help us to meet this goal. The reality is that the proposal for a TRIPS waiver would dismantle the very framework that helped to produce COVID-19 vaccines at an unprecedented pace. More worryingly, the proposal could lead to a dangerous reduction in the quality of products being manufactured and in the already limited supply of key raw materials. This risks compromising vaccine efficacy and patient safety.

Whilst HMG has not seen evidence that IP is a barrier to the production or supply of COVID-19 goods, including vaccines, I am assured that it will continue to engage constructively in debates at the World Trade Organisation and other international institutions on this matter. HMG remains open to all initiatives that will have a demonstrable impact on vaccine production and distribution.

To end this pandemic sooner rather than later, Ministers maintain it is right that we focus efforts on the things that will make a real difference. That includes the promotion of voluntary licensing and technology transfer agreements – several of which have already proven to be successful. I hope, however, that this has provided some useful clarification on this matter.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,

With best wishes

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE