



**Statement the Permanent Mission of the Holy See
to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva
at the 49th Session of the Human Rights Council**

General Debate on Item 3

Geneva, 16 March 2022

Mister Vice-President,

During this Session of the Human Rights Council, a panel discussion was held on the consequences of the inequitable access to Covid-19 vaccines.

In these challenging times, the main barriers impeding the equitable access to, and distribution of vaccines, medicines and health-related technologies are deeply connected to the effects of intellectual property rights (IPRs). As reiterated in the appropriate fora, the Holy See welcomes the contribution of IPRs in the promotion of technological innovation and development. However, such rights should encourage and facilitate above all the pursuit of the common good, “in a manner conducive to social and economic welfare”.¹

Referring to the provision of health care for all as a “moral obligation”, Pope Francis recently urged the relevant multilateral fora and their institutions to “*adapt their legal instruments lest monopolistic rules constitute further obstacles to production and to an organized and consistent access to healthcare on a global level*”.² In this regard, health care should never be subjugated to private interests.

On the contrary, policies and laws should focus on solidarity and the promotion of human dignity, while promoting efficient coordination within and among nations. This implies, *inter alia*, the sharing of research, knowledge and supplies, also with a view to promoting integral human development globally.

So, let us consider the need for a “*new and generous spirit to abandon our individualism and promote the common good: a spirit of justice that mobilises us to ensure universal access to vaccines and the temporary suspension of intellectual property rights; a spirit of communion that allows us to generate a different, more inclusive, just and sustainable economic model*”.³

Thank you, Mister Vice-President.

¹ Cfr. TRIPs Agreement, article 7.

² Cfr. Pope Francis, Address to the Members of the Diplomatic Corps Accredited to the Holy See, 10 January 2022-

³ Cfr. Pope Francis, Video Message to the participants in “Vax Live: The Concert to Reunite the World”, 8 May 2021.