



# Department for International Trade

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To Whom It May Concern,

Thank you for your letter of 11<sup>th</sup> June, asking HM Government to reconsider its position on the proposal submitted by India and South Africa regarding a waiver for the provisions of the Agreement on the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement).

Covid-19 is a global emergency that has required rapid action to expand production and distribution worldwide. What we now need is vaccine production scaled up, whilst not undermining our capacity to fight other diseases, nor the quality and safety of medicines. The aim must be to increase supply.

Complementary to scaling up vaccine manufacturing capacity is the development and distribution of Coronavirus vaccines, in which the United Kingdom is proud to be playing a global leading role. That is why the United Kingdom has helped to raise \$1 billion for the coronavirus COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC) through match-funding other donors, which – combined with the £548 million of British aid pledged – will help distribute at least 1.8 billion doses of coronavirus vaccines to 92 developing countries this year.

HM Government has provided funding for the AstraZeneca vaccine also, produced at cost to low- and middle-income countries, at scale and through manufacturing partnerships across the world. We have encouraged British industry to make sure there is equitable access for all, highlighting the successful partnership of AstraZeneca and the Serum Institute of India as a strong example of what works. We are seeing how voluntary licensing and technology transfer of the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine is having a positive, real impact on access to vaccines. We continue to ask WTO Members to come forward with eligible manufacturing capacity, and WTO efforts to facilitate more partnerships like this are welcome.

We are aware of other WTO members' developing views on a proposed waiver of some provisions of the TRIPS Agreement to tackle Covid-19 and we will continue to engage constructively with them. However, any negotiations in the WTO on a possible waiver will need unanimous support, which could take a long time. So, while we will engage in any discussions, and review any new evidence, we must also continue to push ahead with action now including voluntary licensing and technology transfer agreements for vaccines and support for COVAX.

I hope this letter is of reassurance to you.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

**RANIL JAYAWARDENA MP**  
Minister for International Trade