

Hon Damien O'Connor

MP for West Coast-Tasman

Minister of Agriculture

Minister for Biosecurity

Minister for Land Information

Minister for Rural Communities

Minister for Trade and Export Growth



06 APR 2021

Mele T 'Amanaki
Secretary General
Public Service Association, Tonga
c/o tom.reddington@world-psi.org

Dear Mele T 'Amanaki

Thank you for your letter of 5 March 2021.

The New Zealand Government understands the need for a global response to the pandemic and strongly supports equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines. New Zealand has taken a firm position on this. New Zealand has donated NZ\$17 million to the COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC) to support vaccine access for developing countries and welcomes recent announcements of significantly increased contributions to the COVAX AMC from our international partners.

The New Zealand Government is particularly aware of the need to respond to the impacts of the pandemic you have pointed to within the Pacific. New Zealand has committed NZ\$65 million to support vaccine access and delivery in the Pacific, including providing doses directly to Polynesia. It is critical that no doses go idle, and the Government is therefore focused on ensuring any further doses that New Zealand has purchased but does not need are shared. The COVAX Facility is likely to be an important mechanism for enabling redistribution of doses.

New Zealand is also actively working to encourage countries to remove barriers and open up trade in COVID medicines and other products.

Alongside these efforts, New Zealand has welcomed the discussion within the WTO on the proposed TRIPS waiver. We have been clear within the TRIPS Council that we are open to consider all options for addressing vaccine access issues. It is important the WTO look closely at the impact intellectual property rules are having on global capacity for vaccine manufacture and distribution.

New Zealand will continue to work with others in the WTO and elsewhere on this issue.

Yours sincerely



Hon Damien O'Connor
Minister for Trade and Export Growth