

Viewpoint: Lack of international cooperation could perpetuate the pandemic crisis for years

World leaders now have an opportunity to seal the deal on a global framework that puts international cooperation above vaccine nationalism in stopping the pandemic.

The moment of truth will be at midnight on September 18. That is the deadline for countries to join the [COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility](#) (COVAX), an initiative launched by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, the World Health Organization, and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations. COVAX represents the best chance we have to provide people in all countries with rapid, fair, and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines as soon as they become available. The initiative has already achieved an extraordinary scale, with more than 170 countries (representing 70% of the global population) already signaling their intent to join.

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[T]he global [death toll](#) is approaching one million, with monthly economic losses estimated at [\\$500 billion](#). Under these conditions, ensuring fair, universal access to vaccines is not only the right thing to do. It is also necessary if we are to bring the crisis to an end. Until everyone is protected, everyone will remain at risk of the disease, its adverse economic effects, or both.

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When people look back and marvel at how quickly the scientific community and development practitioners responded to the COVID-19 threat, they will be able to point to the speed with which governments put aside national interests in the name of international cooperation and solidarity.

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