

United Nations criticizes hoarding of COVID vaccines



Rich nations are hoarding vaccines, leaving the poor without. (Photo: AFP)

United Nations, February 21 (RHC)-- As the coronavirus continues to spread around the world, with new, more infectious variants complicating responses to outbreaks, governments are racing to roll out vaccinations.

With more than 57 million vaccine doses administered, the United States is leading the way in the total number of shots administered, followed by China and the European Union.

The United Arab Emirates and Israel have administered at least one dose to the highest proportion of their populations, 81 and 54 percent respectively.

In comparison, lower- and middle-income economies have struggled. Addressing the United Nations Security Council on Wednesday, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said a total of 130 countries had not administered a single dose.

The stark disparity in vaccination rates between high- and low-income economies has led the UN to call for greater vaccine equity on a global scale and renew warnings against so-called “vaccine nationalism” and “vaccine hoarding”.

In his address to the UN Security Council, Guterres slammed the global distribution of vaccines as “wildly uneven and unfair”, noting that 10 countries have administered 75 percent of all vaccine doses. “At this critical moment, vaccine equity is the biggest moral test before the global community,” he said.

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson has pledged to give “the majority of any future surplus vaccines” to the UN-backed COVAX vaccine sharing initiative, designed to provide doses to lower-income countries.

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