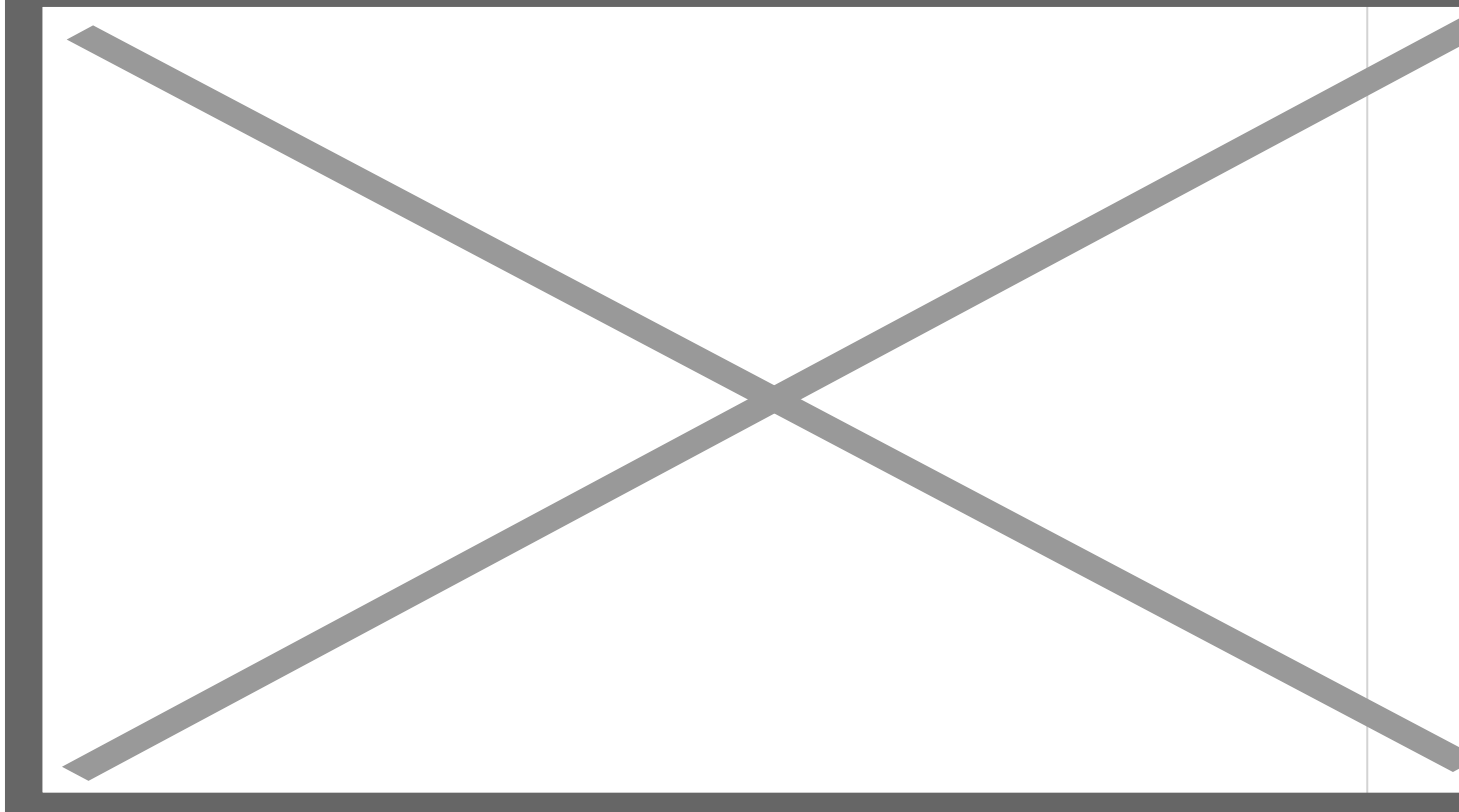


Dirty business

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Large drug companies are making billions and billions of dollars during the pandemic

Even though uncertainty, pain and death are spreading throughout the world due to the uncontrollable pandemic of COVID-19 -- with millions of infections -- someone always finds the opportunity to make juicy business out of this tragedy and others will simply consider it normal behavior of our species to maintain a selfish attitude before adversities.

We should pay attention to the announcement made by the U.S. pharmaceutical giant Pfizer which expects to make some 15 billion dollars this year. No shame was evidenced when the executives of this transnational corporation highlighted that, together with their associates of the BioNTech firm, they had achieved an unprecedented success in increasing the value of their shareholders' wealth.

Once they received the sanitary authorization to start the distribution of vaccines, the company reported profits of \$594 million in the last quarter of 2020, which allowed it to recover the losses accumulated during that year.

So far, it has agreed to deliver 200 million doses in the United States through next May, in addition to another 300 million for the European Union and 40 million for the COVAX organization, created to assist countries with scarce resources.

Nearly all U.S. corporations in the field were able to accelerate their production thanks to a significant injection of capital and contributions from non-governmental sectors and private donors.

In fact, the scientific information and analytics company Airfinity estimated that governments actually provided 8.6 billion dollars and non-profit organizations gave another 1.9 billion dollars to finance research, while the private sector only invested 3.4 billion dollars.

Pharmaceutical companies had free and unlimited access to the specialized studies carried out by universities and public laboratories.

The profits from the sales of immunizers, as well as the knowledge acquired in this process, will not be shared, instead they will enhance the assets of the corporations that will emerge stronger after the pandemic.

The pleas of the World Health Organization and other institutions to make the vaccines against COVID-19 available at little or no cost have fallen on deaf ears.

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