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Berlin, September 14 (RHC)-- More than 140 Nobel laureates and former heads of state have signed an open letter calling on Germany to support a waiver of intellectual property rights for COVID vaccines.

Their call comes as a World Trade Organization panel is set to convene this week to discuss a patent waiver — nearly a year after India and South Africa proposed the move, which would require the unanimous consent of all 164 WTO member nations.

A handful of countries, led by Germany and the United Kingdom, have so far refused to agree to a patent waiver. Joining the call for a People's Vaccine is California Democratic Congressmember Ro Khanna, who said: "This issue is so fundamental. If you believe that every human life has dignity and has moral worth, then we need to ensure that everyone has access to this vaccine. And a first step to getting people access to the vaccine is making sure that we're sharing the know-how of how they can build it."

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