**FWCC Oral Statement for 49th Session of the Human Rights Council**

**Panel discussion on ensuring equitable, affordable, timely and universal access for all countries to vaccines in response to the COVID-19 pandemic**

Friends World Committee for Consultation (Quakers) welcomes this discussion and will focus our comments on access to vaccines for migrants and the impact of vaccine inequality on border governance.

Last December IOM recorded that 149 States included migrants in regular situations in their vaccination programmes in practice but only 84 included irregular migrants, less than half of the States the report covers.[[1]](#footnote-1) Data from the first quarter of 2021 showed that only 28% of National Deployment and Vaccination Plans submitted to the COVAX facility included migrants and just 17% included migrants in an irregular situation.[[2]](#footnote-2)

In addition to ensuring that migrants are eligible to receive vaccinations regardless of their status, measures need to be taken to overcome barriers to access including language barrier and lack of documentation to prove legal identity. Effective firewalls between healthcare services and immigration enforcement are essential to enable safe access to vaccines.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Travel restrictions based on vaccination status present a risk of vaccine inequality further impacting on divergent economic recoveries as well as on human rights of migrants.

As we consider lessons for human rights based approaches in this evolving pandemic and in health emergency preparedness we call on all States to work together towards appropriate responses to border governance that are:

* epidemiologically warranted
* cognisant of the impacts of vaccine inequality
* and in line with international obligations, including international refugee law and international human rights law

Our questions to the panel are:

* how can the upcoming International Migration Review Forum be leveraged to ensure access to vaccines for migrants regardless of status including through the implementation of firewalls?
* how can steps towards human rights based approaches in health emergency preparedness draw on the expertise and experience of migrants to ensure their rights are upheld?

**\*\*\* ENDS \*\*\***

Delivered by Laurel Townhead

Human Rights and Refugees Representative

1. [Migrant Inclusion in COVID 19 Vaccination Campaigns, IOM Country Office Review, 8 December 2018](https://www.iom.int/resources/migrant-inclusion-covid-19-vaccination-campaigns-december-2021-update) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Report of the Secretary-General on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, A/76/642, para. 51 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Report of the Secretary-General on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, A/76/642, para. 100 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)