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WASHINGTON COUNCIL ON  
INTERNATIONAL TRADE

**Statement from Lori Otto Punke, President, Washington Council on International Trade (WCIT)  
WTO Ministerial Conference and decision to suspend TRIPS waiver for Covid Vaccines**

**June 27, 2022. Seattle WA** -- The World Trade Organization’s (WTO) twelfth ministerial concluded on June 17 with agreements reached in critical areas like food security, e-commerce and fishing subsidies. While the success in forging a consensus on these issues should be lauded, the Conference may unfortunately be most remembered for a shortsighted and needless decision to weaken intellectual property protections with the passage of the Covid vaccine waiver.

[WCIT expressed opposition to the waiver](#) in advance of the Conference as we believe it to be “unnecessary, detracting from more effective solutions and posing a threat to IP rights which are critical in alleviating the scourge of inequality and global poverty.” Given that the current challenge is not lack of availability of vaccines, but lack of demand, the WTO agreement has no real-world benefit, and poses potential harm by establishing a dangerous precedent that threatens essential intellectual property protections.

While proving it can still reach multilateral agreements may have helped the WTO’s credibility in the short-term, the vaccine waiver not only raises concerns, but presents very real long-term consequences on IP protections and the world’s ability to prepare for and respond to the next global health crisis.

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Read the WCIT June 6 Blog on this issue: [We don’t need to abandon IP rights to address the vaccine gap](#)

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