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CALL TO PREVENT EXPORT RESTRICTIONS ON COVID-19 VACCINES

COMMUNICATION FROM COLOMBIA, COSTA RICA, ECUADOR, PANAMA AND PARAGUAY

The following communication, dated 18 February 2021, is being circulated at the request of the delegations of Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Panama and Paraguay.

The sponsors of this communication:

Recognizing that the COVID-19 pandemic is one of the greatest challenges in recent history, having a deep social and economic impact worldwide;

Convinced that a global pandemic can only be resolved collectively and through enhanced multilateral cooperation;

Reaffirming that access to COVID-19 vaccines to all WTO Members is essential in collectively fighting against the COVID-19 pandemic;

Desiring to make international trade a powerful tool to help contain the COVID-19 pandemic and contribute to economic recovery;

Acknowledging that the European Union has been a firm supporter of a rules-based trading system;

Recalling that the European Union has recently sponsored a Trade and Health Initiative that calls on WTO Members "to make their utmost efforts to prevent further disruptions in the supply chains of essential medical goods";

Determined to preserve the basic principles of the multilateral trading system;

Jointly express their concern (i) by the recent European Union's decision to put in place a Transparency and Authorization Mechanism for Exports of COVID-19 Vaccines, and its Implementing Regulation, which allows for the adoption of export restrictions on COVID-19 vaccines from the territory of the European Union; (ii) that implementing such measures would disrupt significantly the supply chains and global distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, and its overall predictability; and (iii) that the effects of such measures may negatively impact the current and future fair access to essential medicines for all WTO Members, including for the European Union.

And thus jointly call on the European Union to exercise restraint in the adoption and implementation of any such measures.
