

DAVOS: Liberian nurse protests block on vaccine patents by 'applauding Pharma' CEOs at Davos for pandemic payouts

"Clap for Pharma Profits"

DAVOS, SWITZERLAND, May 25, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Liberian nurse protests block on vaccine patents waiver for developing by 'applauding Pharma' CEOs at Davos, amidst huge pandemic payouts

A frontline nurse from Liberia has launched a 'round of applause' for the Pharma executives at the World Economic Forum who continue to make mammoth profits by refusing to waive patents on Covid-19 vaccines and supplies. In a protest designed as a satirical reversal of the global applause for frontline workers, George Poe Williams sought to highlight the urgent need for Governments to back a patent waiver on vaccines and supplies which has been delayed in the interests of pharma profits.



Pharma CEOs 'applauded' for huge pandemic payouts while blocking patent waivers for developing countries

While the CEOs of Pfizer, Astra Zeneca and a wide array of billionaires met inside the WEF secure area, Williams was stopped by police outside the perimeter shortly after beginning his protest.

Williams said "If I wanted to earn what Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla made last year, I would have to work every single day until 6100 AD. But what makes me really furious is that Bourla and many of his billionaire buddies here at WEF are doing all they can to block our demands for a patent waiver – just so they can make even more money."

Williams' home country of Liberia is one of over a hundred countries backing a waiver at the WTO, which, despite support from the WHO, Médecins Sans Frontière and Public Services International, has been blocked by a handful of Governments at the behest of big-pharma corporations.

Pfizer and other pharmaceutical companies have clocked up over \$34 billion in profits during the pandemic, fuelled by monopoly ownership of vaccines. Yet a recent global analysis of vaccine research & investment found that over 90% came from public funding. Meanwhile many of these firms have been accused of tax avoidance, with a 2018 Oxfam study outlining how big-pharma corporations used tax tricks to cheat countries out of \$3.8 billion in revenue, depriving governments of funding needed to invest in public health systems.

Williams said "Me and my frontline colleagues saw pain, misery, death. Bourla and the other Pharma executives here in Davos saw a chance to pump up profits. I'm not waiting for them to have a moral epiphany - I'm asking that the few remaining governments stop blocking this waiver and start putting our lives ahead of pharma profits."

The patent waiver proposal was first put forward by India and South Africa two years ago and could finally be passed at the 12th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation in mid June, if Germany, the European Commission, UK and Switzerland were to change their position.

Williams said "These blocking governments are putting the interests of pharma corporations ahead of the lives of billions across the global south. Vaccine production continues to be restricted by patents. In Liberia, only a third of us are vaccinated. If they don't act now, they will have blood on their hands."

"After Ebola killed one in ten of my health worker colleagues, we called on governments across the world to create safer frontline conditions, employ more health workers and end the broken medical patent system which hampers pandemic responses. Our calls went unanswered. How many more deaths will it take?"

Williams, who launched his round of applause in front of the tightly secured perimeter of the Forum criticized the "dead ideas" of the Davos set. "This Forum is clearly made to represent the interests of the financial elite - not the interests of us workers who actually make the world economy work."

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For more Photos/Videos of the protest check out this link - all creative commons, credit: Leo Hyde Public Services International <https://psishort.link/davos>.

For interviews with Nurse George Poe Williams in Davos contact Leo Hyde from Public Services International Global Union Federation: leo.hyde@world-psi.org | +33770059557

About Public Services International: PSI is a global trade union federation whose affiliates represent 30 million working women and men who deliver vital public services in 154 countries in both the public and private sector. The majority of our members work in the health sector.

Leo Hyde
Public Services International
+33 7 70 05 95 57
leo.hyde@world-psi.org

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