8th Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator Facilitation Council Meeting Outcome Statement

Now more than ever, we must ACT together to end the pandemic

We are soon entering the third year of the pandemic with a record surge of cases worldwide. However, the pandemic is unfortunately far from being over. We are seeing the power of vaccines to protect vulnerable people, the need for access to oxygen and treatment to save lives, the importance of testing to control transmission and inform effective response, and the necessity of PPE to protect our health care workers and health systems. But these tools are not available to all communities and all people.

"Despite our best efforts, in the year since the start of the global vaccination campaign, low-and lower-middle-income countries have been left behind. Without visibility on supply, countries, COVAX and AVATT can't plan properly. As a result, we are making it twice as hard for these countries. The recent emergence of the Omicron highlights our perilous situation." ***Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General, WHO***

More than 40 countries are yet to achieve 10% vaccine coverage, and almost 70 countries will miss the 40% coverage target by the end of the year. We are also not meeting the global daily testing target, with large disparities between low-income countries and high-income countries. This mix of low testing and low vaccination fuels the spread of new variants.

"We need the full suite of countermeasures – vaccines, treatments, tests, functioning health systems, and PPE – to fight COVID-19 and save lives now. And the world needs the ACT-Accelerator to make this happen. This initiative exists to fulfil the most vital purpose: to save lives. We cannot falter, and we dare not fail," ***Cyril Ramaphosa, President, South Africa***

But there is a way out of the pandemic. Financing the ACT-Accelerator is global health, economic and political imperative. Fully funding the USD 23.4 billion new ACT-Accelerator Strategic Plan and Budget according to the Financing Framework presented at today's meeting will play a crucial role in meeting global targets and delivering the tools that are needed by countries. In addition, there is a need for further procurement and in-country capacities to deliver vaccines and other tools.

"Fully financing the ACT-Accelerator is a matter of urgency. The cost of inaction will be much higher. If COVID-19 is left to spread unchecked anywhere, this will pose a threat everywhere. New viral variants will continue to emerge. They may lead to new waves of infection and render some of our existing COVID-19 tools obsolete. Norway is committed to doing our part. We call on other countries to invest their fair share in controlling this pandemic." ***Jonas Gahr Støre, Prime Minister, Norway***

We call on countries to pay their fair share and fund the USD 16.8 billion[1] needed in grant funding for 2022. We call on the World Bank and the other Multilateral Development Banks to ensure that countries use concessional finance to support their response to the pandemic. And we call on all governments to contribute to controlling the pandemic together.

"In our lifetimes, we may not see a case to do more, both economically and morally. And speed is a critical factor; it is not sufficient to pledge, but how we convert the pledges into action also matters. At this stage, time equals lives and livelihoods saved." ***Gita Gopinath, Chief Economist & the next First Deputy Managing Director, IMF***

The ACT-Accelerator has demonstrated it can deliver, with over 685 million vaccines shipped through COVAX, 148 million tests procured for LMICs, increased access to oxygen, PPE and treatments.

"My focus today is on fair shares. A call to all countries to contribute according to their ability to pay. ACT-Accelerator is founded on our faith; we can deliver a better future. Hope is resilient but ever fragile. Hope dies when countries hoard vaccines that others desperately need. Hope dies when we place profit before people, but hope can come alive, can grow and flourish and make what once seemed impossible possible when all of us come together and mobilise all our energies and resources to stop the march of this lethal disease" ***Gordon Brown, Former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and WHO Ambassador for Global Health Financing***

We will not control the pandemic if the inequity in access and uptake of COIVD-19 tools continues. We all have a role to play. Global solidarity to break the inequity is not an option; it's a necessity.

[1] This figure is under finalization by the Facilitation Council Finance & Resource Mobilization Working Group as part of the work on the Financing Framework.