ACTaccelerator
ACCESS TO COVID-19 TOOLS
Hosted by World Health Organization

Response to the COVID-19 surge in India
Examples from ACT-Accelerator partners, *as of 4 May 2021*

Foundation for Innovation in New Diagnostics (FIND)
As soon as the situation in India began to escalate, FIND reached out to the hardest-hit states to determine the most acute diagnostic needs. An initial package of US$ 1.1 million has been put together to support the testing needs of public sector labs through provision of high-throughput COVID-19 testing machines, automated nucleic acid extractors and ancillary equipment. These will improve the testing throughput and reduce turnaround times. Further support will include increasing access to rapid tests and helping to augment the sequencing capacity within India's public sector.

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
As part of the its COVID-19 Response Mechanism 2021, the Global Fund is urgently processing a fast-track funding application from India's Country Coordinating Mechanism to purchase oxygen concentrators and to finance pressure swing adsorption oxygen plants to help meet the medium-term needs for medical oxygen. It is working closely with the Government of India and national partners to identify solutions to the most critical needs.

In 2020, the Global Fund supported India with over US$ 36.8 million dollars through the COVID-19 Response Mechanism and grant savings and reprogramming to rapidly adapt and mitigate the pandemic's impact on HIV, TB and malaria programs and to directly fight COVID-19. This funding supported various activities, including the procurement of personal protective equipment for health workers and community health workers, laboratory strengthening and the procurement of testing equipment, and supporting community health systems. This funding also supported adaptive measures that were adopted to lessen the impact of COVID-19 on HIV, TB and malaria programs – for instance by decentralizing the delivery of antiretrovirals to ensure that HIV patients had continued access to vital medicines.

In addition to addressing the COVID-19 crisis, the Global Fund continues to be a strong supporter of India's fight against HIV, TB and malaria. To date, the Global Fund has disbursed over US$2.3 billion in grant support to India to fight the three diseases, including over US$ 1.2 billion for HIV programs; over US$888 million for tuberculosis programs; over US$ 28 million for joint HIV-TB programs; and over US$ 226 million for malaria programs.

UNICEF has been helping increase the availability of oxygen as follows:

- Importing 3,014 oxygen concentrators towards the end of 2020 that are being used in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand to respond to the COVID-19 surge
- Distributing 512 high-flow nasal cannulas to 10 states
- Procured 20 oxygen generating plants for four states in the country's Northeast. Supporting emergency procurement of five to 10 more

- Supporting screening at ports of entry, through the installation of 62 thermal scanners. Supporting increased testing, with 85 RT-PCR machines being distributed to states
- Linking to our country offices in India's neighbours, such as Nepal and Pakistan, that have been hard hit by the new surge. All have been asked to prepare an updated overview of response requirements.

See more details on UNICEF's ACT Accelerator-related work to support India in the COVID-19 response.

Unitaid

Wellcome and Unitaid, co-leads of ACT-Accelerator's therapeutics pillar, welcome MSD's commitment to voluntary licensing agreements with five generic manufacturers to serve the needs of India and 100 other low- and middle-income countries. This is an important first step to accelerate and expand global access to the antiviral drug molnupiravir, should upcoming clinical data prove it safe and effective.

Industry plays a central role in ensuring a rapid and effective COVID-19 response. Its commitment to developing promising therapeutics for COVID-19 is critical to filling the need for treatments and ending the pandemic.

Unitaid also welcomes MSD's engagement with the Unitaid-supported Medicines Patent Pool to broaden access to molnupiravir.

World Bank

To date, the World Bank has approved $2.75 billion in emergency lending to support India's response to the COVID-19 crisis.

This includes support to the country's immediate health needs through a US$1 billion COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health System Preparedness Project. More than half this amount has been disbursed to help strengthen health facilities, procure essential medical supplies such as testing equipment and kits, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), gloves, masks, oxygen cylinders for over 2 million frontline health workers. Some examples of this include:

- Ramping up testing capacity to reach 1.5 million RT PCR tests per day
- Oxygen-supported beds increased four times to reach 258,000
- Intensive care unit beds increased 25 times to reach 73,000
- Isolation beds increased by forty-fold to 1.54 million
- Supporting and strengthening social protection programs to help the poor and vulnerable households most affected by the pandemic through the $1 billion Accelerating India's COVID-19 Social Protection Response Program
- Economic stabilization, including support to some 1.5 million small business that are the backbone of the Indian economy, through the US$ 750 million Emergency Response Program for Micro Small and Medium Enterprises.

To help the country through this second wave of the pandemic, the Bank is working quickly to redeploy funds from existing projects and accelerate disbursements to help the government procure much-needed medical equipment, supplies and emergency support. At the request of the authorities, we will rapidly disburse up to US$ 375 million from the balance of financing under the US$ 1 billion COVID-19 Health Response operation approved in 2020. The Indian government has confirmed it will use all of these resources for equipment, supplies and associated emergency support.

World Health Organization (WHO)

WHO has a US$ 28 million operational plan to support India's national response to COVID in 2021. WHO has sent US$ 5 million in oxygen supplies from its emergency supply chain and has issued US$ 4.5 million in emergency funding to support the country office work plan. WHO has also engaged the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network and Emergency Medical Team workforce to provide technical support.

WHO is helping India add hospital beds by procuring mobile field hospitals for the country's most affected areas. The maximum capacity of field hospitals is 50 beds.

The agency is also providing support for laboratories to meet the huge demand for testing, and more than 2,600 staff members have been redeployed to the pandemic response from programmes for polio and neglected tropical diseases. In addition, the WHO Foundation is doing a special India push through the Give a Breath for Health campaign.