ACTaccelerator
ACCESS TO COVID-19 TOOLS

Hosted by World Health Organization

Co-Chairs Outcome Statement from the 6th Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A) Facilitation Council, 12 May 2021

Ensuring an equitable COVID-19 response

The Facilitation Council of ACT-Accelerator met for the 6th time as COVID-19 continues to wreak havoc in communities across the world, with devastating loss of lives and livelihoods. The Facilitation Council Meeting focused on two issues which are crucial for ending the pandemic and reducing the inequality in access to COVID-19 tools:

- **Scale up of vaccine supply to underserved regions of the world through COVAX** by increasing supply and vaccine manufacturing in all regions of the world

- ACT Accelerator's **Health System Connector integrating with the pandemic response to increase use of tests, treatments and PPEs** in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC)

Globally, more than 3.2 million people have lost their lives. Those numbers are near double what they were at the beginning of this year. Acute shortages of oxygen, treatment facilities, diagnostic tests, and vaccines as well as in some cases the absence of non-pharmaceutical interventions, such as social distancing, are exacerbating the crisis in many countries.

Sadly, the COVID-19 response is inequitable, the most explicit example of this being Africa just having administered 1.6% of the total COVID-19 vaccines and only 0.4% of the population having been fully vaccinated. Most low income and lower middle-income countries cannot get hold of vaccine doses to vaccinate health workers and at-risk populations. In contrast, some high-income countries have started to vaccinate lowest risk pediatric populations. **This is not only unacceptable, but also dangerous and warrants bold policy measures.**

Tackling vaccine inequality

Tackling vaccine inequality will require three urgent measures:

- High income countries to share vaccines to AMC 92 economies through COVAX after vaccinating vulnerable populations
- Remove barriers for increasing vaccine production and supply to COVAX
- Immediate work on vaccines manufacturing capability in regions with limited production today

We welcome recent announcement of private, public and multilateral initiatives to catalyze vaccine manufacturing in Africa and other regions with limited vaccine manufacturing capabilities.

COVAX has established a Vaccine Manufacturing Taskforce with the immediate and long-term objectives of increasing supply and production of vaccines. **We appreciate the importance of the Taskforce making progress on its work.** To provide high level political support to COVAX for meeting its objectives, the **Facilitation Council have constituted a Working Group on Vaccine Manufacturing co-chaired by South Africa and Germany**.

In the coming **week** the Facilitation Council Working Group will meet with the **COVAX Taskforce to set specific timebound targets** for increased supply and production of vaccines. We look forward for these **targets to be announced soon**.

Increased use of tests, treatments and PPEs

Vaccines prevent severe illness and significantly decrease mortality from COVID-19. However, we will not be able to end the pandemic with vaccines alone. We must pursue all four lines of defense: vaccines to prevent infections, tests to identify and isolate cases, therapeutics to treat the ill and PPE to protect those on the frontline.

Low-income countries are testing at a rate of 100 times lower than high income countries and inaccessibility to simple life saving treatment like oxygen is causing loss of life in some LMICs.

We welcome the update from Health Systems Connector and the **active involvement of WHO's Health Emergencies Programme** as the focus turns to in-country uptake of tests, treatments, vaccines and PPEs.

We look forward to gaining a better understanding of **how the Health Systems Connector will be managed in this next phase to fully integrate with the response,** and how **its strategy will be implemented to deliver impact at country** level during the next council meeting.

The **success metric for the Health Systems Connector will eventually be measured in uptake of tests, treatments, vaccines and PPEs at the country level.**

A fully financed ACT-Accelerator

To ensure COVID-19 tools are delivered where they are needed most and vaccine manufacturing can be scaled up, ACT-Accelerator requires an additional US$ 18.5 billion in 2021. We urge governments to contribute their share of the financial burden to ensure ACT-Accelerator is fully funded in 2021 to deliver on its objectives.