

## **10th Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator Facilitation Council Meeting**

### **Co-Chairs' Outcome Statement**

#### **Significant decline in testing rates, inequitable access to new COVID therapies & low vaccine coverage is prolonging the pandemic.**

During the 10<sup>th</sup> ACT-Accelerator Facilitation Council meeting, one overriding message came through clearly – the COVID-19 pandemic is not over. Due to the dramatic spread of Omicron and its sub-variants, the world has witnessed the most intense level of virus transmission over the past few months so far. Almost 45 % of all diagnosed COVID-19 cases have been detected in 2022 alone, with 0.8 million recorded deaths. Simultaneously, we are witnessing a significant decline in testing rates worldwide, especially in LICs, LMICs and UMICs, where testing rates have fallen 70, 85 and 90%, respectively. Furthermore, access to promising new COVID-19 treatments remains many months away for LMICs, and vaccine coverage in LICs is still below 15%.

#### **The urgency of ending the pandemic**

These inequities are a real threat, first and foremost for the unvaccinated, untested, and untreated. However, high transmission of the virus and low coverage of tools, especially in vulnerable populations, increases the likelihood of new Variants of Concern, threatening human health and the economy globally. No one is safe until everyone is safe.

The historic impact of the ACT-Accelerator on development and access to tools is summarized in the [Two Year Impact Report](#), in the [Quarterly Updates](#) and on the [Global COVID-19 Access Tracker](#). We must maintain momentum, harness political will and resources to ensure equitable access to COVID-19 tools to end the pandemic and restore livelihoods and ensure recovery and economic growth.

As a global community, we must seize the opportunity offered by the 2nd Global COVID-19 Summit co-hosted by Germany, Indonesia, Belize, Senegal, and the USA on May 12<sup>th</sup> 2022 to commit to ending this pandemic and building systems to prevent or respond to the next. Political leaders, members of civil society, non-governmental organizations, philanthropists, and the private sector are all called upon to make new, specific commitments and bring solutions to vaccinate the world, save lives now and build better health security.

## **Enhancing access to COVID-19 Tools**

Enhancing access to the full set of COVID-19 tools is essential to bring an end to this pandemic. During the Council meeting, we heard about efforts underway to accelerate vaccine delivery in low coverage countries and the ongoing challenges faced. We should not accept two standards for vaccine coverage in the world, one for the poorest countries and another for the rest. Hence, achieving the 70% target vaccine coverage is crucial to reducing morbidity, mortality and disease transmission everywhere, focusing on covering the at-risk populations first.

We also heard about efforts to ensure equitable access to new oral antiviral therapeutics and the challenges to meet timelines for delivery and lack of demand clarity. The dramatic decline in testing rates will make it harder to effectively roll out these new outpatient treatments.

## **Recognizing new contributions & financing urgent priorities**

Fully financing the ACT- Accelerator is the best investment countries can make to end the pandemic. The Co-Chairs would like to thank those who have generously contributed to ACT-Accelerator's 2022 budget. Germany, Norway, Iceland, Japan, Canada, and Brazil have led the way, by contributing or pledging at or above 25% of their fair share. We also thank the European Commission for their generous support and acknowledged private sector contributors, such as the Black Rock Foundation.

The ACT-Accelerator Pillars, working with the Council's Finance and Resource Mobilization Working Group, identified that of the US\$ 15bn remaining ACT-Accelerator funding gap, US\$ 10.7 bn is urgently needed to achieve ACT-Accelerator 2022 targets.

Without these funds, health care workers go unprotected, the elderly, and vulnerable are without vaccines, the sick can't access testing, treatments and oxygen, and our visibility of how the virus is evolving is hampered by lack of genomic surveillance.

## **Looking to the future**

Looking to the future, the Co-Chairs recognize the need to learn lessons from the ACT-Accelerator partnership. To this end, we plan to initiate an independent evaluation of the platform and its successes and challenges, and we would welcome other countries to join us in co-designing and co-leading this.