

ACT-Accelerator Facilitation Council Briefing, 6 July 2021

**Opening remarks, Mr Dag-Inge Ulstein, Minister of International Development,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway**

- The pandemic is testing our ability to save lives – but also our ability to save the fine architecture of international cooperation we have spent so many decades raising.
- We simply cannot afford the two-track pandemic we see continuing to unfold.
- 19 countries are about to run out of oxygen.

- The ACT-Accelerator has passed the mid-point in our funding ambition – but we still have a very long way to go:
- 16.8 billion dollars are still needed.
- South Africa and Norway have written to 89 of the world’s leaders – laying out the financial needs.
- Some countries have generously supported this global initiative – while others have not.
- As the world approaches 4 million lives lost – this is a sobering juncture to ask:
- If not now – when?
- The equity gap must be closed – so let’s have a frank discussion about what needs to be done.

- Since we last met, G7 leaders have made significant commitments.
- While we welcome these pledges – and the ongoing support for COVAX – it does not address the urgent gaps in supply that need to be filled – now.
- Tests are the only means that can show us where the virus is – and how it is evolving – so we can act against it.

- Treatments – coupled with oxygen – especially reaching the most vulnerable and already ill – remain the difference between life and death.
- While we now look to the G20 for leadership – it is a coherent global response that is needed.
- We must accelerate the pace.
- Manufacturers must prioritize COVAX – and countries need to support this.
- We look forward to hearing more news like the one about the vaccine manufacturing hub in South Africa.
- While some parts of the world go on to enjoy summer vacations in near normality – others brace themselves for overwhelmed hospitals and economies on the brink of collapse.
- On the brink of collapse is also the moral fabric of the international society – and its future capacity to solve crises of all kinds.
- Let us go into these discussions with a critical sense of urgency – and realize that we all have a role to play in what comes next.