



World Health Organization

COVID-19 ACT Accelerator launch - 24 April, 2020

Speaker key:

TJ	Tarik Jasarevic
TAG	Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
EM	Emmanuel Macron
UL	Ursula Von Der Leyen
AG	Antonio Guterres
CR	Cyril Ramaphosa
AM	Angela Merkel
CA	Carlos Alverado
GC	Giuseppe Conte
MF	Moussa Faki Mahamat
MG	Melinda Gates
PK	Paul Kagame
MY	Muhyiddin Yassin
MAJ	Muhammad Bin Abdulla al-Jardan
ES	Erna Solberg
PS	Pedro Sanchez
DR	Dominic Raab
SB	Seth Berkeley
PS	Peter Sands
RH	Dr Richard Hatchett
PD	Philippe Duneton
JC	Jagan Chapagain
JF	Sir Jeremy Farrar
TC	Thomas Cueni
HS	Hanan Sboul
SP	Sai Prasad
NOE	Ngozi Okonjo Ewela
AW	Sir Andrew Witty

TJ Hello, everyone, from Geneva, WHO headquarters and welcome to all journalists watching us online and all those watching us on our social media platforms today. As we have announced last evening and also this afternoon, we are having a virtual launch of a

landmark collaboration to accelerate the development, production and equitable distribution of vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics for COVID-19. The aim of this new collaboration is to make vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics for COVID-19 accessible to everyone who needs them worldwide.

Because we have an increased number of speakers at the launch today the event itself will go beyond 90 minutes probably and therefore our next virtual press conference on COVID-19 will take place next Monday, 27th April. I will give the floor immediately to Dr Tedros, who will tell us more about the event and introduce guests.

00:01:25

TAG Your Excellencies, good morning, good afternoon and good evening. The COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented global crisis that has been met with an unprecedented global response. Research and development have played a central role. Since January WHO has been working with thousands of researchers all over the world to accelerate and track vaccine development from developing animal models to clinical trial designs and everything in between.

We have also developed diagnostics that are being used all over the world and we're co-ordinating a global trial on the safety and efficacy of four therapeutics against COVID-19. The world needs these tools and it needs them fast. Past experience has taught us that even when tools are available, they have not been equally available to all. We cannot allow that to happen.

00:02:44

Today WHO is proud to be uniting with many partners to launch the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator or the ACT Accelerator. This is a landmark collaboration to accelerate the development, production and equitable distribution of vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics for COVID-19. Our shared commitment is to ensure all people have access to all the tools to defeat COVID-19.

The ACT accelerator brings together the combined power of several organisations to work with speed and scale. Each of us are doing great work but we cannot work alone. We're coming together to work in new ways to identify challenges and solutions together. I'm especially grateful to President Emmanuel Macron, President Ursula Van Der Leyen and Bill and Melinda Gates for their leadership and partnership in co-hosting this ACT Accelerator launch.

We're also grateful for the support of many world leaders who you will hear from today and I would especially like to thank Sir Andrew Witty and Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala for agreeing to act as Special Envoys for the ACT Accelerator. We're facing a common threat which we can only defeat with a common approach.

I would like to invite other co-hosts to speak, beginning with His Excellency, President Emmanuel Macron. Monsieur Le President, you have the floor.

EM Thank you, Dr Tedros, my friend. [French language].

00:12:36

TAG Thank you. Thank you so much, President Macron, merci beaucoup. Our other co-host is the European Commission and I call upon Dr Ursula Van Der Leyen to make her speech; Dr Ursula Von Der Leyen, the President of the European Commission. You have the floor, madame.

UL Thank you very much. I'm proud of sharing the screen today with our partners worldwide to deliver a message of hope, hope that we can defeat coronavirus together and that we can go back to our normal lives sooner rather than later. I warmly welcome today's call for global action and we're ready to respond.

Indeed in just ten days, on 4th May we will launch a global pledging effort. On that day we will also announce next milestones of a global campaign. This campaign is to kick off an ongoing, rolling replenishment. The aim is to raise €7.5 billion to ramp up work on prevention, diagnostics and treatment and this is a first step only but more will be needed in the future because beating coronavirus will require sustained actions on many fronts.

We need to develop a vaccine, we need to produce it and to deploy it in every single corner of the world and make it available at affordable prices. This vaccine will be our universal common good and I want to invite everyone - governments, business leaders, philanthropists, artists and citizens - to raise awareness about the pledging effort and to help us create a united front against coronavirus.

The European Union will spare no effort to help the world come together against coronavirus because united we will make history with a global response to the global pandemic.

00:14:49

TAG Thank you. Thank you so much, Dr President Von Der Leyen. United we will defeat this pandemic, this virus. Now the next speaker will be the co-chair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Mrs Melinda Gates. You have the floor.

[Long pause]

TAG Okay, I think we have a technical problem. We will come back again to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. I will proceed to the next speakers and the next speaker will be His Excellency, Mr Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations. Your Excellency, you have the floor.

AG Thank you very much. This launch brings together world leaders, the private sector, scientific and humanitarian actors and other partners to promote health, keep the world safe and advance the public good. Human health is the quintessential global public good and today we face a global public enemy like no other. In an interconnected world none of us is safe until all of us are safe.

COVID-19 respects no borders. COVID-19 anywhere is a threat to people everywhere. The world needs the development, production and equitable delivery of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine, therapeutics and diagnostics; not a vaccine or treatments for one country

or region or one half of the world but a vaccine and treatment that are affordable, safe, effective, easily administered and universally available for everyone, everywhere.

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A world free of COVID-19 requires the most massive public health effort in history. Data must be shared, production capacity prepared, resources mobilised, communities engaged and politics set aside. I know we can do it. I know we can put people first. These new tools must be a very clear and essential example of a global public good.

For too long we have undervalued and underinvested in global public goods; a clean environment, cybersecurity, peace; the list goes on so let this be one vital lesson of this pandemic; the need for new urgency in support of global public goods and universal health coverage.

We are in the fight of our lives. We are in it together and we will come out of it stronger together. Thank you.

TAG Thank you. Thank you so much, Secretary-General. Thank you so much for your leadership. Now I move to my own continent, Africa, and I would like to invite His Excellency, President Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa and the Chairperson of the African Union. Your Excellency, you have the floor.

CR Thank you very much, Dr Tedros. I take this opportunity to congratulate the World Health Organization on the launch of this landmark global collaboration that brings together world leaders, health scientists and business leaders. I wish to commend the WHO for their excellent stewardship in the fight against COVID-19 and I also want to single you out for the leadership that you're providing, Dr Tedros. We're delighted with the work that you continue to do and we want to pledge our support.

00:19:37

The severe consequences of this pandemic will be experienced by all countries around the world for some time to come. I appreciate the timely launch of this collaboration as now more than ever the world needs solidarity and co-operation to mobilise and guide all efforts and drive delivery towards equitable access to new COVID-19 diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines.

The WHO has been instrumental in supporting African governments with early detection of the pandemic, the training of health workers on the continent and also in strengthening surveillance in communities, including working with a network of experts to address the containment and prevention of the pandemic.

Many of us will know that Africa is extremely vulnerable to the ravages of this virus and is in need of every possible support and assistance. As Africa we are pleased to be part of the global effort that we're all involved in to tackle this pandemic. For its part the African Union is handling the epidemic through its Africa Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, which is guiding the continent, working together with the WHO.

00:21:15

We have also initiated a COVID-19 response fund to direct resources to bolster the continent's response so for us it is really a joy to be part of this effort to raise resource in order for all of us to get engaged in fighting against this pandemic. To date a number of countries on the continent have contributed money towards this effort.

All our efforts should complement each other. We see this launch as an important milestone to galvanise global support and to help accelerate the work that the WHO is doing. I want to conclude by saying, Africa stands ready to provide the necessary support to the work that is being done and to this effort and to the WHO and to its leadership in Dr Tedros.

So I take the opportunity now to call upon the international community on the sake of all humanity to continue to support [inaudible] that needs to be done in fighting against this invisible [?] enemy. So we're really delighted to be part of this collaboration and thank you very much for making us part of this. Thank you, Tedros. Thank you very much, President Macron. Thank you very much, the Secretary-General of the UN, as well.

TAG Thank you. Thank you so much, Your Excellency, thank you, my brother. Now I would like to invite Her Excellency, Mrs Angela Merkel, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany. Your Excellency, you have the floor.

TJ We're having some technical issues. Can we invite anyone who may be unmuted to mute, thank you.

TAG Your Excellency, you have the floor.
00:23:45

AM Yes, can you hear me now?

TAG Yes, we can hear you.

AM Okay. [German language].

TAG Vielen dank, your excellency. Thank you so much for your leadership. Now we move to Latin America and I would like to invite His Excellency, Mr Carlos Alverado, President of the Republic of Costa Rica. Your Excellency, you have the floor and thank you so much for joining.

CA Thank you very much, Dr Tedros. Good afternoon. [Spanish language]. Gracias, Dr Tedros, my brother.

TAG Muchas gracias, hermano. Thank you so much for your leadership and thank you so much also for taking the initiative to send me the letter. This is part of what we're doing now and we're really proud of your initiative. Now we move to Italy and I would like to invite His Excellency, Mr Giuseppe Conte, President of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Italy. Thank you, grazie mille for joining, Your Excellency. The floor is yours.

GC Mr Secretary-General, Mr Director-General, dear friends, as you all know, Italy has been since the beginning at the front line of this fight against COVID-19. We have learnt on our skin many lessons; first of all that the virus has no borders. This is why we have

immediately promoted international co-operation. Foreign Minister Di Maio has actively campaigned for the International Vaccination Alliance in intervention fora and we are grateful to the World Health Organization and other partners for having taken forward our appeal.

00:32:47

We are proud to be part of this global alliance. I would like to dedicate its launch to those who lost their lives in the fight against COVID-19 and to those who are still struggling. A special thought goes to our true heroes, doctors, nurses and health workers. Their sacrifices will not go in vain.

While we are all still coping with the [unclear] impact of the pandemic there is one thing that we understand well; finding and distributing the vaccine is the only way to win this battle. Let me commend the many researchers and institutions that are working to make this happen, showing that scientific progress is a shared wealth.

As leaders though it's our responsibility to support their work by promoting good governance, transparency, mutual accountability in order to ensure universal, equitable and accelerated access to the vaccine and treatments. I'm confident that our alliance will grow in the spirit of effective multilateralism, putting together our best brains and resources in the interest of the entire mankind.

The Italian Government is sparing no efforts to protect its people and gradually restart its social and economic engine. Also you can be sure that Italy will keep up to its tradition of global solidarity. We will stand by our partners in this common endeavour and you can count on Italy. Together we'll make it. Thank you very much.

00:34:52

TAG Together we will make it. Thank you very much, grazie mille, Your Excellency. Now I would like to invite His Excellency, Mr Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission. Your Excellency and my brother, Moussa, please, you have the floor.

I think voice is not...

MF [French language].

TAG Thank you. Thank you so much, Your Excellency, thank you, my brother. Thank you for your leadership and for the continent-wide strategy that you're leading. Now we move to Saudi Arabia and I would like to invite His Excellency, Mr Mohammed bin Abdullah al-Jadaan of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia G20 Presidency. Your Excellency, you have the floor.

Okay, I think we have a technical problem. Can you hear me, Your Excellency?

Okay, we then move to the next programme. The next five will be video messages from leaders and we will replay the message from the Co-chair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Ms Melinda Gates. Please.

00:39:27

MG The moment we're living through right now is a reminder that we're all part of the same global community. As new diagnostics, treatments and vaccines become available we have a responsibility to get them out equitably with the understanding that all lives have equal value. COVID-19 knows no borders and defeating it will require action and investment across sectors and countries.

The collaboration we're seeing today along with the commitments we make at the upcoming Global Response Summit will help the world rise up to meet this big challenge.

TAG Thank you. Thank you, Melinda, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is co-hosting this launch event and one of the co-leads of this effort. Now we move to a message from His Excellency, President Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda and Chairperson of the NEPARD [?] Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee.

PK The COVID pandemic reminds us that global equity in health is absolutely critical. No-one is safe unless we're all safe. Essential health technologies must be available wherever needed. We must deploy everything that we know about international solidarity to fight COVID together. This is why the new global collaboration for new COVID-19 tools [?] is so important.

This coalition brings together eight of the world's leading health and development organisations and philanthropies. By joining forces to accelerate the development of tests, vaccines and treatments we can end the pandemic sooner. Their commitment to ensuring equal access is the key.

00:41:39

As the African Union's leader for domestic health financing I wish to emphasise the importance of the upcoming pledging event. We have to be accountable to the citizens we serve and to each other. The global collaboration can count on Rwanda's active support.

TAG Thank you. Now His Excellency, Mr Muhyiddin Muhammad Yassin, Prime Minister of Malaysia and Chairperson of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation, APEC.

MY Good morning. My fellow heads of state and government, Madame Ursula Von Der Leyen, President of the European Commission, UN Secretary-General, Mr Antonio Guterres, and WHO Director-General, Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus, I'm honoured to join this important global call. COVID-19 has impacted all of our lives and the global economy in ways never before experienced in living memory.

The only way we can destroy this common invisible enemy of ours is through solidarity and co-operation. The world needs to come together to co-ordinate our efforts and expedite the development of effective tools to stop the spread of this disease. The role of the United Nations remains one of our strongest modalities to curb this pandemic in a manner that can ensure that the arsenals in this war that we are fighting can reach everyone everywhere in the shortest time possible.

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Never before has the clarion call to leave no-one behind been more important than it is now. Malaysia therefore fully supports this landmark global collaboration to accelerate development and production of tools and vaccines and to ensure equitable global access to new COVID-19 essential health technologies.

Malaysia is fully committed to being part of this time-bomb effort and to take on the manufacturing of some of these tools and vaccines as they become available and I urge leaders across the globe, donors, the private sector and the scientific community to support this important effort to win this war against COVID-19. Thank you.

TAG Thank you. Now we go back to Riyadh. I think we're reconnected. [Arabic language] to Your Excellency, Mr Mohammed Bin Abdulla al-Jardan, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the G20 President. Your Excellency, you have the floor.

MAJ Thank you very much and good afternoon and morning or evening, Your Excellencies. Let me begin by thanking the global health actors, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, CB, GAVI, the Global Fund, Unitaid, the Wellcome Trust, the World Bank and WHO for launching this initiative. I also wanted to thank WHO for making the effort to host this important event. I would like also to thank every head of state, every other participant who's with us today for making the time to support this initiative.

We are still faced with an extraordinary uncertainty about the depth and duration of this health crisis. Can the world count on us to come together and co-operate to face this global challenge?

00:45:51

The Saudi G20 Presidency took the lead and worked with its partners and relevant organisations to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. The G20 will continue reinforcing the global co-operation on all fronts and most importantly in closing the immediate financing gap for the health sector.

Today the Saudi G20 Presidency launched a page on the G20 website, [g20.org](https://www.g20.org), to attract contributions towards meeting the health financing gap of US\$8 billion as outlined by the Global Preparedness Monitoring Board. As of today about US\$2 billion have been pledged, which leaves about six billion of a gap remaining.

Saudi Arabia has already pledged 500 million to the relevant international organisations and in global health to support the global efforts. This contribution will support the emergency and preparedness response, developing and deploying diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines and contributing to ensuring sufficient supplies of protective equipment for health workers.

It is critical to continue investing to accelerate development, production and equitable global access to new COVID-19 essential health technologies. Therefore we welcome and strongly support this initiative, but this is not enough.

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We might face a similar situation in the future, facing a virus that is deadly, disrupting the lives of people and pushing nations to shut their borders and impose lock-downs. In order for us to deal with future pandemics effectively we have to invest in strengthening our preparedness and response systems.

That is why the G20 is working with the relevant international organisations to assess the gaps with a view to establishing a global initiative on pandemic preparedness and response so that when we, or our kids for that matter, face a similar situation in the future we are better prepared to respond to it, saving people's lives, safeguarding their well-being and it will be the smartest investment for us all to make today. Thank you very much.

TAG Shukran Jazeelan, Your Excellency, and Ramadan Kareem.

MAJ Thank you.

TAG Thank you for your leadership. Thank you. Now we move into our messages from our leaders and the next will be Her Excellency, Ms Erna Solberg, Prime Minister of Norway.

EM People and governments across the world are now asking the same urgent questions; how can we test enough people for COVID-19 infection; how can we give better and more effective treatment to those who are ill; and how can we secure fair distribution of vaccine when available?

00:49:19

With the launch of this global collaboration we have a unique opportunity to answer these questions. By committing to working together we can accelerate development and production of diagnostics, treatments and vaccines against COVID-19. And we must commit to a system of fair global access because as long as the virus is active somewhere we are anxious everywhere.

Norway supports this unique collaboration. I encourage all others to do the same. In the fight against the coronavirus we must leave no-one behind.

TAG Takk, takk skal du ha, Your Excellency. Next we will move to Spain and a message from His Excellency, Mr Pedro Sanchez, Prime Minister of Spain.

PS Hello. My name is Pedro Sanchez. I'm the Prime Minister of Spain. We're in the midst of an unprecedented crisis but we have the chance to act decisively and come out stronger from it. As long as there are people infected anywhere in the world none of us will be safe. I am committed, my country's committed to doing whatever it takes to avoid anything similar happening again in my country, Spain, or anywhere else.

We firmly believe that solidarity and multilateralism are the only way forward and we have declared so publicly. Now is the time to walk the talk and today I believe we're taking a decisive step in there right direction. Spain, my country, is firmly committed to the leadership of the United Nations and to the central role of the World Health Organization in dealing with the global efforts to fight the pandemic and its impacts on people and prosperity.

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Going forward we must strengthen the multilateral architecture and enable it to respond faster and more effectively. In order to counter COVID-19 we need vaccines, effective treatments and fast and reliable tests. We need them soon and most importantly everybody needs them. It is imperative to develop the capacity to produce and distribute them at scale and at affordable prices. They must be accessible to everyone and every country in the world.

In the fight against COVID-19 no-one should be left behind. We must move away from fragmented, individual efforts towards a collaborative approach. The magnitude of investment needed, the risks attached, the fear of regulatory and market change are all real obstacles in the quest for a vaccine. No private company, no government, no country alone can escape them. Partnerships are the only solution.

Today we're calling for action. Together we can find the tools needed to address the crisis faster and better. Spain, my country, stands with you. My dear friends, you can count on our full support. Thank you very much. Muchas gracias.

TAG Muchas gracias, Your Excellency. Now a message from His Excellency, Mr Dominic Raab, Secretary of Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. I would like to use this opportunity to appreciate my friend, Prime Minister Boris Johnson. He has been very, very keen on this initiative from the start and following up even while he was still unwell and I would like to express my great respect and appreciation for his commitment to this initiative and I hope he's now proud that it has reached this level and the whole world is behind this initiative. Thank you, Boris, and please, the next message.

00:54:14

Let me start by thanking the World Health Organization and Dr Tedros for convening this event. The Prime Minister asked me to convey that today's announcements have his full support. We all know that COVID-19 is the biggest global threat the world has faced in a generation. For our part the UK is striving to tackle the effects of the virus at home whilst at the same time galvanising international action to drive the development of and fair access to a vaccine.

The UK's one of the biggest donors to the international response. We've already pledged £744 million and that includes £250 million of UK aid for the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations to rapidly develop a coronavirus vaccine. We're supporting the University of Oxford and Imperial College, London in their research to develop vaccines, contributing £42.5 million to support their work through clinical testing. Yesterday the University of Oxford started phase one human safety trials.

But as coronavirus has shown, in our interconnected world diseases have no borders and so it's only through coming together and collective solutions that we'll be able to defeat this virus. That's why the UK's proud to support the WHO's call to action. We welcome global health partners coming together to accelerate progress towards a vaccine and we look forward to supporting the Global Coronavirus Response Summit on 4th May, which will drive forward our collective global effort to tackle coronavirus.

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It will ensure that desperately-needed resources for research and development of new vaccine, therapeutics and diagnostics are made available so that we can overcome this disease. We also look forward to working with Sir Andrew Witty and Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala in their roles as the new vaccine Envoys.

The UK will host the Global Vaccine Summit virtually on 4th June, where we need to fully fund GAVI and make sure GAVI's expertise and capacity are at the heart of our efforts to ensure equitable access for any vaccine. Finally I want to say, the UK's proud to be standing side-by-side with our international partners in the fight against coronavirus. By working together we can develop an affordable vaccine which is accessible to anyone who needs it as quickly as possible to end this pandemic once and for all.

TAG Thank you, Your Excellency. Now we move to our key partners. They have been waiting online, listening to our leaders from all over the world and I will start with Dr Seth Berkeley, Chief Executive Officer, GAVI, the vaccine alliance, who has been working very hard to make this launch a reality. My brother, you have the floor. Seth.

SB Thank you, Dr Tedros, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. COVID-19 is truly a global problem and requires a global solution. To do so we need the best science globally and to bring those solutions to all people. That is why I'm so glad to be working with all of my other sister organisations to try to accelerate COVID-19 tools.

00:57:52

As you know, GAVI, the vaccine alliance currently helps vaccinate nearly half the world's children as part of its mission to save lives, reduce poverty and protect the world against the threat of epidemics. We need other tools. You will have heard it said that without a vaccine we will never defeat this pandemic. This is likely true and what this means is that we need to devise and deliver a vaccine programme to get billions of doses out at a speed and scale never before contemplated let alone achieved; the most rapid vaccine deployment in history.

GAVI has a unique role to play in this global collaboration with over two decades of experience at introducing nearly 500 new vaccines we can help identify and prioritise the most suitable vaccines to make this momentous task possible and to scale up manufacturing at risk [?] so that we have adequate supplies.

Lastly the infrastructure we have helped put in place in the countries we support right down to the community level will help us ensure not one person gets left behind. This is what GAVI was set up to do. We are already helping countries deliver vital testing and other equipment and working to maintain life-saving immunisations even as countries face up to the pandemic.

The expertise and the structures to defeat COVID-19 are in place. Today in this esteemed company I'm proud to say we now have the commitment. We look forward to working with all of you. Thank you.

00:59:23

TAG Thank you, Seth, and thank you, GAVI. GAVI and Global Fund actually have reprogrammed their funding from day one to fight COVID and I would like to recognise that and thank you so much for your leadership. Now I go to Peter Sands, the Executive Director, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Peter, my friend, you have the floor.

PS Right, thank you, Tedros. The Global Fund is committed to playing our part in this extraordinary and crucial partnership. Given our role we're focusing primarily on the deployment of life-saving therapeutics and diagnostics, strengthening the vital systems of health to deliver the services and also acting to mitigate the potentially disastrous knock-on impact on HIV, TB, malaria; diseases that kill 2.7 million people a year and where we risk surrendering the tremendous gains we've made in recent years.

In fighting COVID-19 in fact we should learn the lessons from these earlier pandemics, from the fights we've had against HIV, TB and malaria. First we absolutely need neutrals [?] and we need them fast and we need to pursue vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics with equal vigour. A vaccine is the best answer, but it is not the only answer. It's worth reflecting that in the fight against HIV, TB and malaria despite huge efforts we still don't have a vaccine against any of them.

But with diagnostics, therapeutics and prophylactics we have demonstrated that we can achieve massive reductions in mortality and many parts of the world have eliminated these diseases as threats to public health.

01:01:26

Second, we must recognise that developing new tools is essential but not enough. We must make sure the people who need them get them. The lessons from AIDS must be learnt. Too many millions died before antiretroviral medicines were made widely accessible, in large part through the creation of the Global Fund. In the fight against COVID-19 we must leave no-one behind.

Third, access to drugs is also not enough. These have to be delivered within a system of care. This takes money, infrastructure, capacities. For example less than a third of the cost of the fight against AIDS, TB and malaria is the cost of the biomedical tools.

Finally we need everyone engaged in this fight and above all we need the communities that are most affected. Defeating COVID-19 and mitigating the impact on HIV, TB and malaria will need not just the engagement of these communities but their leadership. To defeat COVID-19 we must unite to fight this common threat to humanity. Thank you.

TAG Thank you. Thank you, Peter. Now we move to our other key partner - sister organisation I prefer to say, as Seth said - Chief Executive of the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness and Innovation, CEPI, Dr Richard Hatchett. Richard, you have the floor.

RH Thank you, Dr Tedros. It's an honour to be here today to commit CEPI to work as part of the ACT Accelerator. The establishment of the ACT Accelerator is a watershed moment in the world coming together to develop a global exit strategy from the COVID-19 pandemic.

01:03:38

The challenge we face in medical, humanitarian and economic terms is unprecedented. We can meet it only by bringing together the combined strengths of governments, multilateral institutions, the private sector and civil society. Everyone must have access to the tools and countermeasures - including vaccines - that we will develop through the ACT Accelerator.

Science and policy must align in their commitment to equity and justice. We cannot meet the ongoing threat of COVID-19 one country at a time. COVID-19 anywhere is a threat everywhere. Today there is hope. By bringing together the collective strengths, resources and expertise of the institutions that will contribute to the ACT Accelerator we can end this pandemic together. CEPI is proud to be part of this global collaborative effort.

TAG Thank you. Thank you, Richard. Thank you so much for your partnership. Now we move to Unitaid. The next speaker will be Executive Director of Unitaid, Mr Philippe Duneton. Please, Philippe.

PD Thank you, Dr Tedros. Your Excellencies, dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, these extraordinary times demand that the global health community stand in solidarity to find solutions to defeat and eliminate COVID-19. We also need to take care of the people who were and still are under threat of other diseases. Just to pay attention, tomorrow is also Malaria Day.

01:05:45

But this global threat requires an unprecedented global response. The launch of the ASET Accelerator today is key to strengthen and accelerate the world community response against COVID-19. We all know that we need a vaccine but also as soon as possible we need a test-and-treat approach that requires new treatments, better and faster diagnostics.

This solution needs to work everywhere, including countries with weak health systems and we need to ensure access to all those in need including health and community workers. We believe we, as part of the health community and with industry, can make it. To succeed we must rely on science and good R&D and ensure equitable and affordable access to [unclear].

These are also the core activities of Unitaid's mandate. This requires close collaboration with all partners in the response. This is the commitment we are making today. Unitaid has already started and will actively collaborate alongside partners supporting an urgent and ambitious response to the COVID pandemic.

It is the combat of our lives and we will do everything we can to succeed. Thanks to the heads of state from the north and the south; thanks to WHO and all of us to make this happen for the people of the world. Thank you.

TAG Thank you, Felipe, thank you, Unitaid. Now we move to IFRC, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the Secretary-General, Mr Jagan Chapagain. Please, Jagan, you have the floor.

01:07:38

JC Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, let me start by thanking Dr Tedros for his leadership of WHO in this difficult time. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is fully committed to this global collaboration, the ACT Accelerator. As the largest volunteer-based humanitarian network we joined the call to assure equitable global access to new COVID-19 essential health technologies, starting from the most vulnerable communities in difficult and fragile contexts.

Developing technologies, be it vaccines, drugs or diagnostics, is a very important first step. Ensuring fair allocation and timely delivery to all in need is the greatest challenge. The time to prioritise equity is now. This means putting the most disadvantaged communities at the centre of our response to this pandemic.

We in IFRC distribute to 14 million Red Cross/Red Crescent volunteers and all of the volunteers have their heroic work at the community level in more than 192 countries. We offer this network in support of this global effort to ensure that no-one is left behind in this humanitarian crisis.

The power of our humanity is and will be measured by how we collectively protect the weakest among us. Thank you.

TAG Thank you. Thank you, Jagan, thank you, IFRC. Now I'd like to invite my brother, Sir - Dr - Jeremy Farrar, Director, Wellcome Trust. Jeremy, you have the floor.

01:09:38

JF Dr Tedros, Your Excellencies and colleagues from around the world, thank you very much for bringing us together. Amidst the horror of this pandemic this partnership does offer us our greatest hope and also by bringing everybody together the greatest chance to deliver. The whole world is affected and the whole world must come together to find an equitable way through this. We must leave no-one behind, as we've heard repeatedly today.

Physical distancing, testing, isolation and the best clinical care are absolutely crucial now but this is now a human-endemic infection; it will not disappear; this is not SARS. The only true exit strategy is through science and the manufacturing of that science and the equitable distribution to the world to make sure everybody receives it, independent of their ability to pay.

We do need all; we need diagnostics, we need treatment and we need vaccines and we have to have the capacity to deliver them, not just make them. This is what this unprecedented partnership can and this is what this unprecedented partnership will deliver. Thank you for the inspirational comments and support from all the world leaders to the WHO, to the global agencies, to citizens and to philanthropy and also to the private sector, who have come together under the co-ordination of the WHO in an unprecedented way to address an unprecedented crisis.

A chance to end this pandemic through multilateralism and out of this pandemic and out of this crisis the chance to actually forge a better world, a better world which is more equitable and which commits to public health. That is the prize of our time; yes for COVID but actually beyond COVID to the whole of public health and it's a question of social justice and equity; it's a question of the sort of world that we want to live in.

01:11:33

Thank you, Dr Tedros; thank you to yourself, the great leadership through this but also thank you to your great team alongside you, who have made this happen and it has not been always easy. I pay tribute to all the healthcare workers all over the world who are putting their lives at risk so that all of us can be that little bit safer.

The hard work starts now and nobody should be under any illusions; this is going to be incredibly hard work but together we can, together we will and together we must. Dr Tedros, thank you very much for your leadership.

TAG Thank you. Thank you, Jeremy. I fully agree; together. I also would like to borrow your words; a better world out of this difficult situation. Thank you so much for reminding us of that. You have heard from our political leaders, our agency leaders and now the next group will be the business leaders.

We don't believe that this initiative will succeed without the private sector so I have colleagues who will be speaking, representing the private sector. The private sector is central to the success of this initiative and I would like to invite Ambassador Thomas Cueni, Director-General, International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers, IFPMA. You have the floor, Thomas.

01:13:21

TC I am unmuted. Thank you, Dr Tedros. The biopharmaceutical industry is acutely aware of the enormous responsibility we have to patients and society to engage in unprecedented levels of collaboration to find the solution to COVID-19. We stand ready to bring to this partnership our unique knowledge and expertise in the discovery and development of medicines and vaccines as well as our experience in building manufacturing capacity and distribution networks.

Today scientists in in the public and private sector hold the keys to our common goal, the swift end of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are proud to be part of this landmark global partnership and are fully committed to its goal to accelerate development, production and equitable global access to safe, effective and affordable COVID-19 therapeutics and vaccines.

In the fight against COVID-19 we must ensure that no-one is left behind. We will only succeed in this journey together. Thank you, Dr Tedros.

TAG Thank you. Thank you so much, Thomas. Now we move to another colleague, Ms Hanan Sboul, Chair, the International Generic and Biosimilar Medicines Association. Madame, you have the floor.

HS Tedros, Your Excellencies. Beside the need for the novel treatment to combat COVID-19 there is a tremendous need for existing medicines to treat infected patients. The global generic and biosimilar medicines industry, IGBA, is living up to its vision to improve access to those cost-effective quality medicines worldwide.

We call on the global community and political leaders to support this landmark collaboration to ensure that every single patient around the globe is treated. Thank you.

TAG Thank you. Thank you so much indeed. Now the next speaker will be the President of the Developing Countries Vaccine Manufacturers' Network, Mr Sai Prasad. I think if you can unmute probably...

SP Thank you, Dr Tedros. We, the Developing Country Vaccine Manufacturers' Network, hereby express our steadfast commitment to support COVAX's objectives. Our network of manufacturers supply more than three billion doses of vaccines in 170 countries every year. Our commitment to COVID access is expressed in three distinct ways.

First, the many companies in our network are developing vaccines against COVID-19. Second, our network of manufacturers are based across countries around the world with manufacturing facilities, capacities and expertise which are ready to be deployed when vaccines are available for COVID-19.

Third and most importantly we continue to manufacture and supply other life-saving vaccines which are critical for global public health. Dr Tedros, the co-hosts, Your Excellencies, we appreciate the opportunity to serve the global community with this call to action. We leave you with the statement, leave no-one behind. Thank you.

TJ Leave no-one behind. Dr, Dr Prasat. Namaste. Thank you so much.

01:17:37

SP Namaste.

TAG Thank you. We have listened to our political leaders, agency leaders, business leaders and now I will move into our other speakers. Two of them are Special Envoys; Dr Ngozi Okonjo Ewela and also Sir Andrew Witty. I will start with Ngozi. My sister, you have the floor. Congratulations and thank you also for accepting our challenge to be a Special Envoy of this very, very important initiative, ACT and Accelerate. Thank you. Ngozi.

NOE Can you hear me?

TAG Yes, we can hear you; please.

NOE Okay. Thank you so much, Dr Tedros. Thank you for your leadership in these difficult times. Thank you, Your Excellencies, for coming together on this global endeavour. I won't say much except to say it's an honour to accept this task to serve the global common good and to act as a bridge to the developing world, especially to my continent, Africa.

Equity, access and affordability are the key tenets of our efforts and should remain the key tenets. We must all come together and work to achieve all this. Thank you so much.

TAG Thank you. Thank you, Ngozi, thank you so much indeed. Ngozi is also selected as Special Envoy by His Excellency, President Cyril Ramaphosa, to lead the COVID response event in Africa and she will act as a bridge between Africa and this initiative and that will be a very, very important role.

01:19:49

Having said that, now I move to Sir Andrew Witty, former CEO of GSK and now our Special Envoy. You have the floor and thank you so much for accepting the offer to lead this initiative. Thank you.

AW Dr Tedros, thank you very much for this opportunity. I'm humbled to have been asked to undertake this role to support this unprecedented coalition and all I want to say simply today is, I'm absolutely committed to working with all of the partners to build on all of the work that's been done already, to avoid duplicating work, to help catalyse the fantastic efforts that have already been undertaken, with a mission to achieve great, equitable access to the various tools that we know we need to deal with this pandemic.

Please count on me for open-minded, energetic support and engagement and I simply ask in return for your support and collaboration in helping us to work forward to bring this to an end as quickly as possible. Thank you.

TAG Thank you, thank you so much, Sir Andrew Witty. We're coming to the end of our launch. Thank you so much to all our political leaders who have given your support and for your leadership. Thank you also to our agency leaders, to our business leaders and also to our Envoys. This is everybody's business, as you said, and we will do everything to make this initiative a success as partners.

01:21:57

I would also like to end this launch by reminding you that May 4th will be the pledging event. That will be hosted by the European Commission and you have already heard from President Ursula Van Der Leyen and other participants of this launch. We hope to see you all then on May 14th [sic] to make the pledging event a success.

Thank you so much again from our side and united we can defeat this virus and we have to fight it in unison. Thank you so much again. May 4th; again. Sorry, I think I said May 14th; the pledging event is May 4th. Let's join the European Commission and President Ursula Van Der Leyen to make this pledging event a success. May 4th is the date. Thank you.

TJ Thank you very much, Dr Tedros, and thanks to all our guests. We will have a transcript available from this event in hopefully the next couple of hours because there were a few audio issues with some of the audio speakers so hopefully that will be helpful. We will also be sending you documents regarding this event as well as other news from WHO regions and country offices.

The next press conference on COVID-19 will be on Monday. Have a great weekend, everyone. Thank you.

01:23:55