

Current targets and strategies must be corrected to respond adequately to COVID-19 emergency

Statement on Global COVID-19 Summit from ACT-A Civil Society Representatives

On 22 September, the United States (US) hosted the Global COVID-19 Summit: Ending the Pandemic and Building Back Better on the margins of the UN General Assembly. While the Summit aimed to catalyse and welcome momentum to progress the pandemic response, its targets^[1] fall far short in addressing the shortcomings of the current response. We call on the G-7 and G-20 countries to develop more ambitious targets with more urgency with a time bound roadmap and accountability.

There is an unjustified focus on health security interventions while neglecting alarming and growing gaps in basic health and community systems and progress towards universal health coverage (UHC). At the same time, there isn't enough of a focus on building equity and long-term resilience; among others, the role of women and the gendered impacts of the pandemic as well as the disruptions to essential health and community-led services should be urgently addressed. Health security interventions will be hollow and ineffective unless supported by robust, equitable and community-led health systems.

Too many lives of people of all ages continue to be lost due to the pandemic and its secondary impacts. Major pharmaceutical companies and governments, particularly those in the G-7, should stop justifying and masking the outrageously slow progress that keeps the world, particularly the poorest nations, in a losing position.

Targets of the Global Covid-19 Summit are woefully inadequate to meet current and future consequences of this pandemic and must be corrected. ^[2] As the Civil Society and Community Representatives on the ACT-A, we call for:

- **Manufacturers to change the current ineffective, immoral, unethical, inhumane, and profit-driven course of action**, especially: start using the COVID-19 Technology Access Pool (C-TAP) and share COVID-19 health technology-related knowledge, intellectual property, and data. Governments must take urgent measures to ensure this happens. Public goods and public health values should stand above profit-driven interest to effectively address COVID-19.
- **The G-7 and G-20 countries to correct their course of action, set adequate targets and hold themselves accountable for progress towards them**, particularly the goal of at least 70 percent of the population fully vaccinated by mid-2022 is not ambitious enough to end the pandemic! We need to shift to vaccinate everywhere without delay. We are seeing one pandemic with two realities: high-income and upper-middle income countries vaccinated their populations and are moving on to the future pandemic preparedness investments, leaving behind the rest of the unvaccinated world. No one is safe until everyone is safe.
- **A fully costed and financed plan** to develop and deliver COVID-19 tools, including vaccines needed to end this pandemic is essential. The plan must have clear time-bound milestones that all stakeholders can be held to account for. This requires concerted action and cooperation between global health institutions, governments, the private sector, and civil society in the spirit of partnership for development. We all stand to lose from a protracted pandemic.
- **Support the implementation of viable test and treat strategies** worldwide.

- **Address the lack of investment in cross-cutting health and community systems.** Urgent, equitable investments in primary health care, and integrated resilient health and community-led systems are essential for effective COVID-19 responses and health security.
- Invest immediately in supporting countries to **address the health workforce shortages**, training, surge capacity for vaccine delivery, and protection. The next phase of the COVID-19 response must include a stronger commitment to health and community workers, and addressing the health workforce shortage.
- **Honor previous donation commitments** immediately. Delivery on commitments has fallen short, at a critical time in the response.
- The US government to **support collective action**. The next Summit and other global, regional and national platforms must be open and transparent and engage all the relevant stakeholders, particularly civil society and communities. Civil society and community stakeholders must also be meaningfully involved in tracking progress as well as designing and planning interventions to ensure the plans are fit for purpose and informed by knowledge from the communities. Coordination and communication are essential. The civil society should be resourced to be able to engage effectively and meaningfully.
- The US Government to **match every Pfizer vaccine with an ultra cold chain investment, in addition to the health and community systems commitment promised at the Summit, as many countries do not have the cold chain in place for Pfizer vaccines.** These donations and funding mechanisms should occur simultaneously, in order for vaccine roll out to occur within expiration dates of vaccines.

[1] FACT SHEET: President Biden's Global COVID-19 Summit: Ending the Pandemic and Building Back Better. Accessed via: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/09/22/fact-sheet-president-bidens-global-covid-19-summit-ending-the-pandemic-and-building-back-better/>. Date Accessed: 23rd September 2021

[2] Biden's global summit Covid-19 targets are woefully inadequate and must be corrected by Brook K. Baker. Accessed via: <https://www.statnews.com/2021/09/22/bidens-global-summit-covid-19-targets-are-woefully-inadequate-and-must-be-corrected/> Date Accessed: 23rd September 2021

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