



ACTaccelerator

ACCESS TO COVID-19 TOOLS

14 October 2020

Dear ACT-A Facilitation Council Members, partners, invitees, and observers,

We write as the Co-Chairs of the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator Facilitation Council to thank you for your participation in the Council's inaugural meeting of 10 September and for your commitment to ensure the success of this end-to-end global solution to expedite an end of the COVID-19 pandemic and the re-opening of our economies as quickly as possible. We have the honor to update you on developments since our first meeting and to inform you that the 2nd Facilitation Council meeting is planned for 3 November 2020. A formal invitation letter will be sent shortly.

Since the Council last met, the ACT-Accelerator has made further, somewhat remarkable progress:

- Vaccines: as of today, 68 higher income economies have joined the COVAX Facility, with a further 25 economies indicating they will sign on as soon as they can. These self-financing economies join the 92 lower income economies that are eligible for financial support through the Gavi COVAX Advance Market Commitment;
- Diagnostics: in the past 2 weeks, two high-performing rapid antigen diagnostic tests (RDTs) received WHO Emergency Use Listing and last week ACT-A partners led by FIND, Global Fund, WHO, UNITAID and BMGF announced that a volume guarantee for 120 million antigen RDTs has been secured from these 2 manufacturers, providing LICs/LMICs access to well-performing, low-cost point-of-care testing (i.e. at a cost of US\$5/test to begin);
- Therapeutics: in the past month, new policy and technical guidance has been issued for the use of dexamethasone as the first life-saving therapy for severe COVID-19 disease, which is now being rolled out for low -and middle-income countries.
- Health Systems Connector: 100+ countries have been surveyed to identify bottlenecks and capacity gaps for the introduction of COVID-19 tools. Additionally, systems requirements for tool delivery has been mapped in 4 of 6 WHO regions.

As Council Co-Chairs, we have in parallel been working with the WHO Envoys and ACT-Accelerator Hub to establish ways of working, with our representatives meeting weekly with the Hub and specific Pillars to discuss progress, challenges and how the Council can help with political support and resource mobilization. Going forward, we plan to update all WHO Member States on a monthly basis through the regular WHO COVID-19 briefings. All of this is with a view to helping you, our Council members, in tackling ACT-A's strategic, political, policy and financial challenges.

The major funding announcements of the United Kingdom, Canada, Germany and Sweden at the United Nations General Assembly last week amounted to pledges of nearly \$US1 billion. The World Bank Group has also signaled that substantial financing support will be available for low and lower-middle income countries to purchase approved vaccines. These financing pledges are important and substantive steps towards closing the ACT-A financing gap, and will be officially counted as they are formalized.