

Chairs' Summary – Joint Working Session of the G7 Development and Health Ministers “Supporting vaccine equity and pandemic preparedness in developing countries”

Chairs' Summary by Svenja Schulze, Germany's Minister for Development Cooperation, and Karl Lauterbach, Germany's Minister for Health, in their capacities as Co-Chairs of the Joint Working Session of G7 Development and Health Ministers

19 May 2022

On 19 May 2022, the G7 Development and Health Ministers convened for a joint session on “Supporting vaccine equity and pandemic preparedness in developing countries”. The G7 Ministers discussed two key issues: i) accelerating equitable and sustainable access to safe, effective and quality-assured vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics (VTD) in developing countries and ii) strengthening pandemic prevention, preparedness and response (PPR) in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Reiterating the G7 Foreign Ministers' Statement on Ukraine, we condemn the Russian Federation's unjustifiable, unprovoked and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine and its people. We are deeply concerned about the far-reaching economic, health, social, food security, human rights and political consequences of Russia's war of aggression both regionally and globally.

Session 1: Accelerating equitable and sustainable access to safe, effective and quality-assured vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics (VTD) in developing countries

The G7 Ministers of Development and Health confirmed their commitment to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic in all countries through equitable and rapid global distribution of safe, effective, quality-assured and affordable vaccines as well as diagnostics, therapeutics and other essential health products, to address the global vaccine equity gap and to support LMICs in this respect. They underlined that to

achieve these pressing goals and to support the transition towards more long-term and integrated COVID-19 control, VTD distribution and rollout capacities as well as appropriate testing and surveillance strategies in LMICs must be strengthened, especially through more resilient public health systems and capacity building, while adapting to national and regional specificities, relying on epidemiological data. They committed to continue supporting delivery efforts, particularly on last mile and ensuring that access to vulnerable groups is prioritised, of vaccines and life-saving medical tools in developing countries through complementary and coordinated bilateral and multilateral measures. They also committed to support continued innovation to develop new and better tools and support evidence-based approaches to immunisation and treatment strategies as the virus continues to evolve.

Ministers also reaffirmed support to all pillars of the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A), including adequate contributions to enable ACT-A to end the acute phase of the pandemic in 2022, as well as substantial contributions to vaccine support for COVAX AMC eligible countries. To date, the G7 have collectively made 18.3 billion USD available to this endeavour. Multilateral contributions to ACT-A partner organizations and accompanying bilateral efforts were highlighted as being equally central to ending the acute phase of the pandemic in 2022.

The G7 Ministers also underlined their support to the targeted increase of global vaccine production adapted to demand as well as substantial and sustainable strengthening of viable regional VTD production in developing countries, especially in Africa. In particular, the G7 Ministers highlighted their continued determination to provide technical or financial support for building long-term production capacities, creating strengthened and harmonized regulatory environments and the need to create sustainable markets. They discussed the role pharmaceutical companies can play regarding voluntary technology transfer and licensing. The G7 Ministers reaffirmed their support to the African Union's goal to reach 60% production rate by 2040 and will continue to support WHO's vaccine technology transfer hub launched in South Africa. Building reliable VTD capacity and supporting the health workforce in LMICs was underlined as a crucial step towards overcoming the equity gap and ensuring sustainable production.

Session 2: Strengthening pandemic prevention, preparedness and response (PPR) in low- and middle-income countries

The G7 Ministers also discussed measures to prevent, prepare for and respond to future pandemics and health emergencies. They recognized that leveraging our collective investments and measures to end COVID-19 and supporting pandemic PPR in all countries and regions are foundational elements to sustainably strengthen global health security and health systems performance. They considered it crucial to reinforce universal health coverage (UHC) objectives and to align pandemic PPR as part of a mutually reinforcing system. Ministers also reinforced that it is key to support LMICs in increasing health system resilience, as well as strengthening One Health approaches. Such a framework recognizing the links among human, animal and environmental health was highlighted as crucial to enable the deployment of surveillance capacities covering a cross-sectoral scope at national level, allowing in particular to better anticipate and prevent the emergence of infectious diseases with pandemic potential. Ministers noted with particular concern the importance of ensuring gender-equitable access to gender-responsive health services, including sexual and reproductive health services, in particular for the most vulnerable and marginalized populations, as well as the importance of developing more equitable health system preparedness and response mechanisms.

The G7 Ministers discussed the goal of strengthening the global health architecture, with the WHO at its centre, and ensuring adequate and sustainable financing for enhanced pandemic PPR, especially in currently underfinanced areas, which could be complementarily addressed in part by a new financial intermediary fund for pandemic preparedness at the World Bank. They also reaffirmed that strengthening, reforming and sustainably financing WHO will be key. Further, the G7 Ministers committed to support the International Negotiating Body (INB) to draft and negotiate a WHO convention, agreement or other international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response, recognizing that an inclusive process with all WHO member states and civil society is key for successful implementation. G7 Ministers also reaffirmed the importance of further strengthening the International Health Regulations (IHR) (2005), including through implementation, compliance and targeted amendments in a comprehensive and inclusive process taking into account the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. G7 Ministers welcomed discussions toward enhanced accountability measures for PPR. Finally, G7 Ministers recognized that multiple ongoing crises ought not to divert attention from other

epidemics, communicable and non-communicable diseases and health issues, such as HIV, TB, malaria, polio, Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs), sexual and reproductive health and rights and antimicrobial resistance (AMR).