

Tackling COVID-19 together through the ACT-Accelerator

I'm delighted to be speaking here today from Vietnam to co-host this event with UN Secretary-General, Dr Tedros, South-African Health Minister Zweli Lawrence Mkhize, and we feel that the issue of equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines, treatments and tests is absolutely vital and urgent. As Secretary of State for the new Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, we bring together both our diplomatic reach and expertise with our development, aid and experience to this vital agenda.

Scientific cooperation has made breakthroughs at frankly record-breaking pace. With our enhanced collective knowledge, I think we're in a much better position to tackle this terrible, invisible virus. In the UK, we are proud to play our part, supporting lifesaving treatments and backing up vaccine research with funding and investment.

But new products will only have the influence that we need them to have, the impact on the pandemic, if they reach people who need them. So collaboration under the ACT-Accelerator is our best hope to bring the pandemic under control, and the UK is proud to support this initiative to drive equitable access and global impact through our funding. As my Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said, the health of every country depends on the whole world having access to safe and effective vaccines, wherever and whenever that breakthrough may occur. And the UK will do everything we can within our power to bring that about.

We have actively engaged in the collaborative design of the COVAX facility, which is an unprecedented alliance of countries and partners pooling resources to accelerate vaccine development. We want to be able to ensure large-scale manufacturing, rapid delivery of the future vaccines globally and on an equitable basis. I'm very proud that the Prime Minister has announced the UK's participation in the COVAX facility, which demonstrates our commitment to multilateral solutions to the global challenges that we all face.

The pandemic is really an acid test of our international resolve to work together on the issue of the day, on the issue facing our generation, in order to save lives and rebuild our economies. We don't just think it's a moral responsibility, we see the direct national interest that we have and others have in protecting not just our citizens through vaccinating them, but preventing and isolating ourselves from a second global wave that would threaten us all. So we need to work together, we need others to join in that endeavour, and the UK has made a minimum commitment of £250 million and we will add an extra £1 for every \$4 committed by others, up to an additional £250 million.

Statements are important, but real collaboration is vital and we've got to back our aspirations with the resources necessary. The UK is living up to the

responsibility we feel to ensure vaccines, treatments and tests are truly available to all and I call on the international community to step up so we can rise to this ground-breaking challenge together.

Thank you very much. I think we've seen from the various different contributions today the importance of the multilateral approaches to ensuring global access to new vaccines, treatments and testing. Collaboration is our best hope to bring the pandemic under control and our best hope to keep our economies and our societies open, which can ensure a genuinely collective economic recovery.

I welcome the renewed commitments that have been made today. I welcome the discussions that we've had and all of the contributions that our participants have made. And I think as we look ahead to what will be a very busy autumn, we must use the commitments here today as the moment and the impetus for all of us to rise to the challenge and deliver the leadership and the investment that's required to make a success of this enormous and daunting challenge. It's only by working together that we can bring an end to the pandemic for everyone, everywhere.

Thank you very much again.