

## COVID-19 Situation Report #39

Reporting period 13 February 2021 - 25 February 2021



TOTAL DEATHS:

2,490,776

**TOTAL CASES:** 

112,209,815

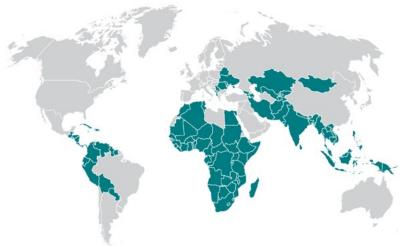
as of 25 February - Source: WHO

Meeting on 19 February 2021, G7 leaders reaffirmed their support for all pillars of the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A) and its COVAX facility, and committed US\$4.3 billion to finance global equitable access to tests, treatments and vaccines in 2021. In addition, the European Investment Bank committed a further US\$242 million in loan guarantees which will help the ACT-Accelerator partnership to frontload future payments to speed up the response. While praising G7 countries for their pledge. WHO Director-General urged increased funding and cooperation, and incoming WTO Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala called to "reject vaccine nationalism and protectionism" that could slow pandemic recovery and erode economic growth for all countries - rich and poor, Anthony Fauci, U.S. President's chief scientific advisor, said the HIV pandemic provides a "precedent" for how to get lifesaving medicines to those who could not afford them, highlighting the achievements of the Global Fund and PEPFAR. Ghana received the historic first shipment of COVAX vaccine doses. The ACT-Accelerator Therapeutics pillar co-led by Unitaid and Wellcome launched a COVID-19 Oxygen Emergency Taskforce in partnership with a WHO-led consortium to coordinate and advocate for increased supply of oxygen in low- and middle-income countries. UNICEF signed agreements with 10 world leading airlines to prioritize delivery of COVID-19 vaccines, essential medicines and other critical supplies across the globe. Global Citizen launched with WHO and the European Commission its Recovery Plan for the World, a year-long campaign designed to better the planet across five categories, including ending COVID-19.

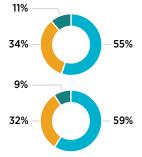
The World Food Programme <u>highlighted</u> the impact of COVID-19 on school feeding around the world in a <u>report</u>, while Human Right Watch <u>reported</u> at least 83 countries had used COVID-19 as a justification to attack free speech. Research <u>discovered</u> a new form of the coronavirus was spreading in New York City, U.S.A., <u>found</u> viral load was reduced four-fold for infections occurring 12-28 days after the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, and <u>suggested</u> tuberculosis preventive therapy could mitigate the effect of COVID-19 on TB if implemented urgently.

## Global Fund Response: At a Glance

- ► Total funds approved to date: US\$988 million
- Countries receiving Global Fund support for COVID-19: 106 countries and 15 multicountry programs
- ► Total funds raised to date: US\$259 million
- ▶ Immediate fundraising target: a minimum of US\$5 billion



- ► How countries are using COVID-19 Response Mechanism support:
  - **55%:** Reinforcing national COVID-19 response
  - ▶ 34%: Mitigating COVID-19 impact on HIV, TB and malaria programs
  - ▶ 11%: Urgent improvements in health and community systems
- ► How countries are using grant flexibilities\*:
  - ▶ **59%**: Reinforcing national COVID-19 response
  - > 32%: Mitigating COVID-19 impact on HIV, TB and malaria programs
- ▶ 9%: Urgent improvements in health and community systems



<sup>\*</sup> NOTE: Percentages based on data from 15 countries which cover more than 50% of the total amount of grant flexibilities.

Global Fund Response In Depth

The Global Fund responded immediately to the pandemic by awarding US\$988 million to 106 countries and 15 multicountry programs to support their responses to COVID-19, but has now fully deployed all its funding for this purpose. The Global Fund urgently needs at least US\$5 billion on top of its core funding to support countries in responding to the pandemic. This figure represents part of the overall financing needs of the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-Accelerator), the global collaborative partnership in which the Global fund plays a leading role.

There are significant further needs for immediate funding, including for personal protective equipment (PPE), testing and treatment, and to mitigate the impact on lifesaving HIV, TB and malaria programs. To defeat COVID-19, the Global Fund advocates a comprehensive approach that brings together testing, treatments, vaccines and the health systems and medical supplies to make it happen – vaccines alone will not be enough.

Testing is the first line of defense against COVID-19. As WHO Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, said: "Access to quality tests and laboratory services is like having a good radar system that gets you where you need to go. Without it, you're flying blind."

New mutations of the virus underscore the urgent need to contain COVID-19 in all countries. Even if wealthier countries succeed in rapidly rolling out vaccine and containment campaigns, if we do not do the same in low- and middle-income countries at the same time, the virus will continue to mutate and will pose a new threat to everyone – even countries that manage to control the original COVID-19 strain.

Investing in formal and community health systems worldwide is critical to our global health security, and is the only way we will fight existing epidemics like HIV, TB and malaria, new pandemics like COVID-19, and future health threats. According to a recent study in the medical journal The Lancet, over one-third of the Global Fund's work supports global health security by helping countries prepare for, detect and respond to public health emergencies through funding of laboratory systems, fighting antimicrobial resistance, and the deployment of medical countermeasures and personnel.

## **Funding Approved**

Total approved US\$988 million

#### US\$229 million\*

#### Grant flexibilities

Use of funds remains mostly from grant savings, focused mainly on infection control, diagnostics activities & products, and lab equipment; reprogramming requests approved in small number of cases.

\*as of today's approvals

### US\$759 million

### COVID-19 Response Mechanism

- Funding requests received: 105 and 55 top-up requests
- Funding requests funded: 93 and 46 top-up requests
- ▶ Funding remaining: US\$0 Demand for funding has exceeded available funds. Countries are continuing to submit urgent requests for funding, and requests are expected to rise.

NOTE: Full list of countries with approved funding is available <a href="here">here</a>. The totals in the online table may differ from the table above because countries are only added to the online list once they have been officially notified of funding approval.

Countries are using the funds awarded as part of the Global Fund's COVID-19 response to:

- ▶ Reinforce national COVID-19 responses, including purchasing critical tests, treatments and medical supplies; protecting front-line health workers with training and PPE like gloves and masks; and supporting control and containment interventions, including test, trace and treat/isolate:
- Mitigate COVID-19 impact on lifesaving HIV, TB and malaria programs, including by delivering medicines, mosquito nets and critical supplies door to door, protecting community health workers and providing support and prevention services via digital platforms;
- Make urgent improvements to health and community systems to help fight COVID-19, HIV, TB and malaria, including by reinforcing supply chains, laboratory networks and community-led response systems.

In addition to redeployed internal funds, the Global Fund's COVID-19 response received **US\$259 million** from donors including Canada, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Norway and the FIFA Foundation.

Global Fund Response In Depth

The Global Fund helps countries fight COVID-19 with critical tests, treatments and medical supplies, protect front-line health workers, adapt lifesaving HIV, TB and malaria programs, and reinforce fragile systems for health. We are leveraging the Global Fund's extensive health and community networks and our well-established health procurement and distribution system to distribute new COVID-19 tools, medical supplies and training at scale in more than 100 countries.

Protecting Front-line Health Workers: The Global Fund is providing funding to countries to purchase personal protective equipment such as masks, gloves and gowns. Countries can purchase equipment locally or can place orders for price-assured quality health products through our Pooled Procurement Mechanism or on wambo.org.

- ▶ **US\$276 million** of COVID-19 Response Mechanism funds have been allocated for the provision of personal protective equipment (PPEs). This is enough to purchase more than **100 million** daily PPE kits for front-line health workers.
- ▶ **52** countries have purchased PPEs on <u>wambo.org</u>

#### **Additional Resources:**

- ► COVID-19 Impact on Health Product Supply: Assessment and Recommendations
- ▶ Update for PRs on Placing Orders and Procuring COVID-19 Products in 2021
- List of Personal Protective Equipment and Oxygen Products Available for Procurement via Wambo.org
- Procurement Advice

**Diagnostics:** The Global Fund is supporting countries and partners to develop and implement national testing strategies using a combination of PCR and Ag RDT tests. In addition, the Global Fund has leveraged its laboratory infrastructure initially designed

for tuberculosis diagnosis and HIV viral load testing to immediately respond to COVID-19. The scaling up of an installed base of over 10,000 Cepheid's GeneXpert molecular diagnostic devices in laboratories across low- and middle-income countries, and the technicians trained to operate them, has enabled these countries to massively expand their COVID-19 testing capacities since the beginning of the pandemic.

- ▶ **US\$182 million** of COVID-19 Response Mechanism funds have been allocated for the provision of diagnostics tests.
- To date, 18.8 million requisitions for diagnostics tests (PCR and Ag RDT) have been placed across a total of 82 countries, including:
  - ▶ Requisitions for **3.6 million** automated PCR diagnostic tests across **80** countries
  - ▶ Requisitions for **14.8 million** Ag RDT tests across **30** countries
  - ▶ Requisitions for **400,000** manual PCR diagnostic tests

### **Additional Resources:**

- ► Scaling-up Testing with Antigen-Detection Diagnostics
- ▶ Ordering COVID-19 Diagnostics through the Global Fund: Frequently Asked Questions
- ▶ List of SARS-CoV-2 Diagnostic Test Kits and Equipment Eligible for Procurement
- ▶ PPM Reference Price List for COVID-19 Diagnostics
- ▶ Interim Quality Assurance Requirements for the Procurement of COVID-19 Diagnostic Products
- Diagnostics Consortium for Cepheid GeneXpert COVID-19 Polymerase Chain Reaction Tests for the 2 million tests for the 6 months allocation period
- Antigen-detection in the diagnosis of SARS-CoV-2 infection using rapid immunoassays.



**Treatment:** Following WHO recommendation, the Global Fund is supporting the use of corticosteroids for COVID-19. Global Fund implementers can include corticosteroids for COVID-19 in COVID-19 funding requests. Since August 2020, the Global Fund has made available the procurement of oxygen equipment products on wambo.org. The Global Fund has currently funded up to **US\$10 million** for oxygen products.

#### **Additional Resources:**

- ▶ Treatment and Oxygen Equipment
- List of Oxygen Products via Wambo.org

# Global Fund Response In Depth

## The Global Fund, a founding partner of the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator

The Global Fund is a founding partner of the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, a global collaboration of leading public health agencies and governments working to accelerate the development, production and equitable access to new COVID-19 tests, treatments and vaccines once available. As part of the ACT-Accelerator, we are a co-convener of both the Diagnostics Partnership (with FIND) and the Health Systems Connector (with the World Bank), and we are a procurement and deployment partner in the Therapeutics Partnership. Along with other partners, the Global Fund is actively involved in the WHO Diagnostics Consortium to monitor the supply and demand of molecular and rapid diagnostics tests for COVID-19 and implement the WHO allocation for scarcely available COVID-19 products. We have opened our innovative online sourcing portal, wambo.org, to all countries and organizations so they also can benefit from the Global Fund's economies of scale for health products.

By the end of 2021, the ACT-Accelerator aims to deliver **900 million** diagnostic tests, **165 million** courses of treatment and **2 billion** doses of vaccine to low- and middle-income countries.

The ACT-Accelerator Prioritized Strategy & Budget for 2021 identifies three major shifts and four strategic priorities:

#### 3 major shifts

- We have entered the era of COVID-19 vaccines.
- ► Viral variants are emerging with increasingly ► concerning characteristics.
- International collaboration is increasingly fragmented and underinvesting in global solutions.

## 4 strategic priorities

- Rapidly scale up the delivery of over 2 billion vaccine doses across the world.
- Bolster research and development, evaluation and regulatory pathways to optimize products and address the novel COVID-19 variants that have been identified.
- Prioritize the rapid and effective uptake of tests, treatments and PPE in low- and middleincome countries.
- Ensure a robust supply pipeline of essential tests, treatments and PPE for low- and middle-income countries.

- ▶ Diagnostics Pillar. In 2021, testing will play an even more critical role with the spread of new variants. Additional funding will strategically address three main priorities. Firstly, it will drive the development and at-scale availability of affordable, digitally-integrated tests. Secondly, it will secure equitable access to tests to reduce the testing gap between high-income and low-income countries, procuring 900 million tests to contain hotspots and detect the emergence of novel variants. Thirdly, these funds will stimulate rapid and effective country uptake of tests, including capacity building in countries to roll-out testing at scale. Beyond March 2021, the focus will be on making a mass-produced, US\$0.50 test available to everyone, everywhere, with 500 million tests deployed to LIC/LMICs by mid-2021.
- Over **50.1 million** COVID-19 tests (**30.9 million** PCR tests and **19.2 million** Ag-RDTs tests) have been procured for low- and middle-income countries.
- Over 23,000 health care workers are being trained in almost 200 countries to effectively implement the tests.
- ▶ Independently assessed and benchmarked over **60** RDTs against quality criteria to inform government procurement of quality COVID-19 tests.
- ▶ Fast-tracked access to 120 million affordable, high quality Ag-RDTs for low- and middle-income countries.
- Improved regionalized manufacturing and technology transfers to increase global manufacturing capacity of quality and affordable RDTs.



Therapeutics Pillar. The 2021 strategy prioritizes support for countries in optimizing clinical care and introducing new tools, as well as procurement of existing therapeutics, such as dexamethasone and medical oxygen products. As more than half a million COVID-19 patients in low- and middle-income countries are estimated to need oxygen treatment every day, the <a href="COVID-19">COVID-19</a> Oxygen <a href="Emergency Taskforce">Emergency Taskforce</a> brings together key organizations working on oxygen access under the ACT-Accelerator Therapeutics pillar to measure oxygen demand, work with financing partners, and secure oxygen supplies and technical support for worst-affected countries. New assessments show <a href="US\$90">US\$90</a> million immediate funding is required to meet urgent need in up to 20 low- and middle-income countries. Unitaid and Wellcome, as co-leaders of he ACT-Accelerator Therapeutics pillar, will make an immediate contribution of up to US\$20 million in total for the emergency response.

Note: the costing of medical oxygen equipment is integrated into the Therapeutics Pillar of the ACT-Accelerator, but resources needed to operationalize the use of medical oxygen equipment such as health workers and guidelines remain under the Health Systems Connector of the ACT-Accelerator.

- 3.2 million lifesaving dexamethasone treatments have been supplied (including 2.9 million by UNICEF)
- Over 1,700 clinical trials are analyzed for promising treatments.
- Manufacturing capacities are reserved for scale-up of monoclonal antibodies while research into monoclonal is advancing.
- ▶ Health Systems Connector. The Health Systems Connector (HSC) aims to support countries on key health systems enablers as well as be the vehicle to make personal protective equipment and medical oxygen available as high priority commodities, especially in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). As country readiness is an absolute prerequisite to the equitable scale-up of other COVID-19 tools, priority in 2021 is to identify and address bottlenecks in health systems and to make sure that COVID-19 tools are successfully delivered and made available, with a priority on personal protective equipment for front-line workers.
  - Systems requirements for delivery of COVID-19 tools have been mapped in **four** out of six world regions, and country readiness assessments for tool rollout are being conducted in more than **100** countries.
  - ▶ US\$276 million worth of personal protective equipment (PPE) has been procured for LMICs (through the Global Fund). This is enough to purchase more than 100 million daily basic PPE kits of gloves and masks for health workers.

### ACT-Accelerator Funding Update as of 25 February 2021

- ► Total funds committed: Over **US\$10.3 billion**
- Funding gap: **US\$22.9 billion**

#### Additional Resources:

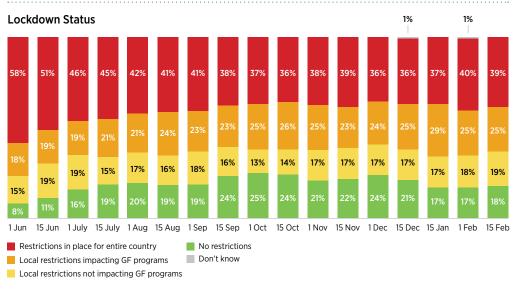
- ► ACT-A prioritized strategy and budget for 2021
- A Financial Framework for ACT Accelerator
- ▶ Statement of the Co Chairs of the 4th ACT Accelerator Facilitation Council
- ▶ Livestreamed 4th ACT-Accelerator Facilitation Council
- ▶ Joint press release from Ministers Sanner and Mboweni
- ► Summary of the Co-Chairs of the 3rd ACT-Accelerator Facilitation Council
- Statement of the Co-Chairs of the 3rd Meeting of the ACT-A Facilitation Council
- ► Chairs' Summary of the 2nd Meeting of the ACT-A Facilitation Council
- Letter to the G20
- ► ACT-Accelerator Commitment Tracker
- Interactive ACT Accelerator's Funding Commitment Tracker
- ► ACT-A Status Report & Plan
- ► <u>ACT-A Diagnostics Partnership Investment Case</u>
- ► ACT-A Therapeutics Partnership Investment Case
- ► ACT-A Vaccines Pillar (COVAX)
- ► The ACT-Accelerator frequently asked questions
- Accelerating access to vaccines through the ACT-Accelerator & COVAX
- ► ACT-Accelerator Facilitation Council Terms of reference

## **Global Fund Response**Global Fund COVID-19 Country Monitoring

As of **29 January 2021**, the Global Fund's product and delivery outlook shows the overall <u>impact of COVID-19 on health product supply chains</u> for Global Fund grants remains at **moderate**.

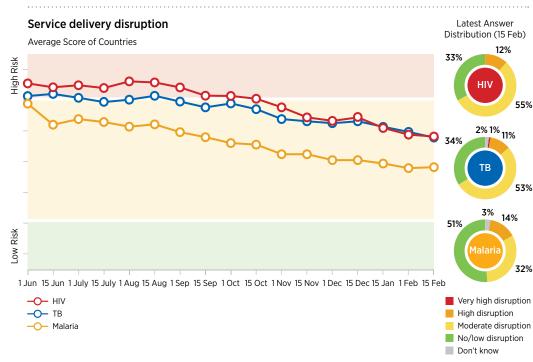
Country-based Local Fund Agents, who monitor grant implementation and progress on behalf of the Global Fund, complete a biweekly survey online to help identify potential risks and disruptions to programs. The tool is not meant to be a rigorous assessment of the country situation. The data is based on in-country stakeholder views but not on verified data. Key insights as of **15 February 2021**:

**Countries in lockdown:** 39% of countries where the Global Fund invests are experiencing nationwide lockdowns as of 15 February, slightly down from 40% on 1 February. 25% of countries are still experiencing local restrictions that impact the programs run by the Global Fund.



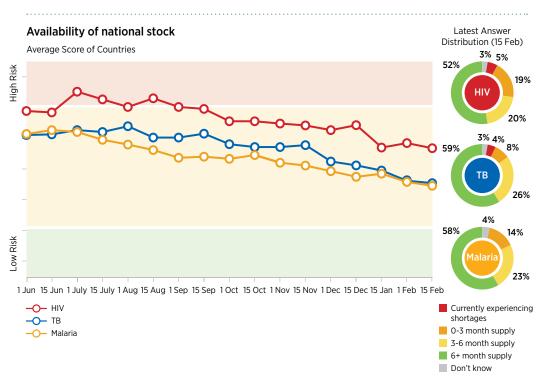
**Costed national plans:** The percentage of countries that have costed response plans in place for their COVID-19 response remains stable. On 15 February 2021, 80% of countries had a costed response plan in place, compared to 75% on 15 June 2020, and 83% on 15 November 2020.

**Disruption to health service delivery:** 11% to 14% of countries are still reporting high disruption in service delivery for all three components, and 1% of countries are reporting very high service delivery disruption for TB. More than half (51%) of countries are reporting no or low disruption to health service delivery for malaria (compared to 33% of countries for HIV and 34% for TB).

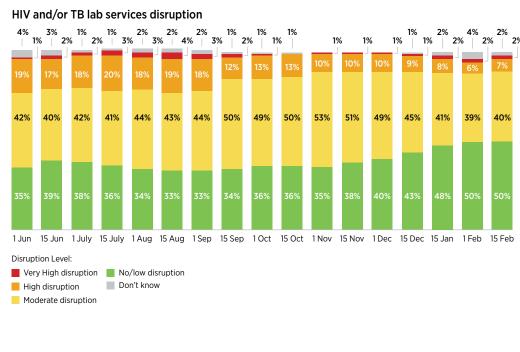


## **Global Fund Response**Global Fund COVID-19 Country Monitoring

**Disruption to supply of key medicines:** The risk trend in supply of key HIV, TB and malaria medicines has slightly decreased between 1 February and 15 February. For all three components, at least half of the countries where the Global Fund invests have a minimum 6 months' supply capacity of key medicines. However, the situation has not improved since 1 February: 5% of countries are still experiencing shortages of key HIV medicines, and 4% of countries are still experiencing shortages of key TB medicines.

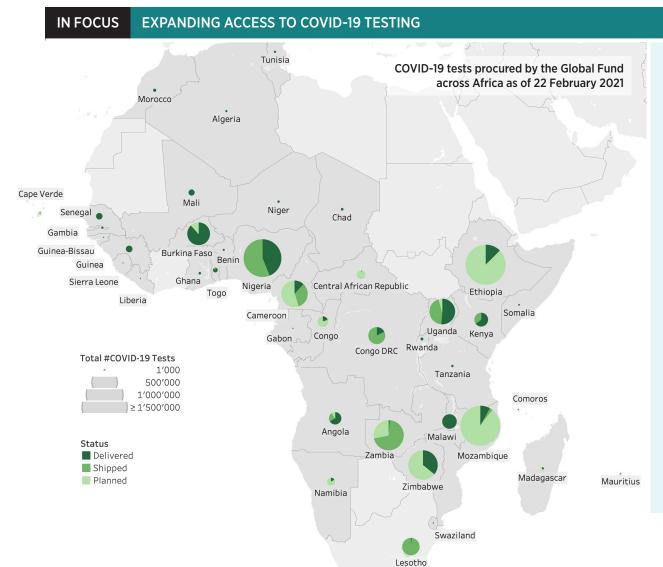


Lab services: The improving trend observed since 1 November 2020 has stabilized, with 50% of countries reporting no or low HIV and/or TB lab services disruption as of 15 February 2021. However, the percentage of countries experiencing high HIV and/or TB lab services disruption has slightly increased from 6% on 1 February to 7% on 15 February.



# Global Fund Response Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 on HIV, TB and Malaria





More than a year after the emergence of COVID-19, most low- and middle-income countries continue to face immense challenges in accessing diagnostic tools they need to control the virus. Testing is the first line of defense and one of the most effective tools we have right now against COVID-19. Testing, tracing, treating and isolating people affected by COVID-19 stops the virus being spread to others, saves lives and is a critical part of the vaccine roll-out. However, there is huge inequality in the availability of COVID-19 tests between rich and poor countries, and low- and middle-income countries urgently need more tests. High-income countries are testing 26 times more people than low-income countries. Based on spot checks conducted by the Global Fund in 328 health facilities in 22 countries in Africa in 2020, only 12% had Ag RDTs and 8% had PCR tests. Scaling up testing is absolutely critical to identifying and isolating infected individuals and eventually controlling the spread of the virus.

As a founding partner of the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A), and as a co-convener of both the Diagnostics and Health Systems Connector, the Global Fund is investing in efforts to bring diagnostics to countries that need them the most. As of this week, the Global Fund had procured more than 18.5 million test kits (antigen rapid diagnostic tests and polymerase-chain reaction or PCR tests), most of them for countries in Africa. The tests represent only a small fraction of the dire need for tests across countries. The ACT-Accelerator has secured 120 million rapid tests through a groundbreaking agreement with manufacturers.

The infographic shows Global Fund's investments in testing kits across Africa. To expand access to diagnostics, the Global Fund urgently needs more funding.

## Global Fund Response Communications, Media and Events



## **Communication Products**

- News Releases:
  - ▶ G7 leaders commit US\$4.3 billion to finance global equitable access to tests, treatments and vaccines in 2021 ENG
- Stories and videos:
  - Meet a very humble hero ENG | FRA | JAP | SPA
  - Country dialogue during the pandemic: Indonesia shows the virtual way ENG
- Op-eds:
  - Safely Reopening Requires Testing, Tracing and Isolation, Not Just Vaccines By Peter Sands, Executive Director of the Global Fund, and Achim Steiner, UNDP Administrator ENG | FRA | JAP

### In the News

- ▶ The Independent 25 February 2021 Oxygen shortages endangering half a million Covid patients every day in poorest countries, research shows
- ▶ NPR 23 February 2021 <u>History repeats itself: COVID-19 vaccine inequities echo HIV crisis</u>
- ▶ This Day 23 February 2021 NACA: Nigeria among six countries defying COVID-19 impact on HIV-AIDS
- ► Health Policy Watch 22 February 2021 G-7 commitments of US\$4.3 billion not enough rich countries need to stop COVID vaccine hoarding to open access bottleneck, says WHO Director General
- ▶ Health Policy Watch 22 February 2021 Global health diplomacy in the COVID-19 era can failure usher in a new era of success?
- Devex 18 February 2021 Opinion: The fight against TB, paused by COVID-19, must resume
- ▶ Jeune Afrique 18 February 2021 <u>Jacques Attali : « La deuxième moitié du 21e siècle sera africaine »</u>
- ▶ The Wall Street Journal 12 February 2021 Will we be ready for the next pandemic?

## **On Social Media**



- @ACTAccelerator Six reasons to support the ACT Accelerator
- @DrTedros The @ACTAccelerator is a great team, scoring goals for public health & defeating #COVID19 & inequity
- @GlobalFund RT @WSJ Will We Be Ready for the Next Pandemic?
- ▶ @GlobalFund RT @GlblCtzn #WorldRecoveryPlan



- @GlobalFund Rosemary's story
- @GlobalFund In Colombia, people living with #HIV struggling to access lifesaving health services



 @GlobalFund - Protecting the most vulnerable in Latin America and the Caribbean during times of COVID-19



@GlobalFund - Meet a Very Humble Hero

## Global Fund Response Communications, Media and Events



## **Partners' Publications**

24 February	WHO - COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan
24 February	WHO - Looking back at a year that changed the world: WHO's response to COVID-19
23 February	Global Citizen - Recovery Plan for the World
23 February	WHO - Priority medical devices list for the COVID-19 response and associated technical specifications
▶ 17 February	WHO - Maintaining a safe and adequate blood supply and collecting convalescent plasma in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic
▶ 16 February	WHO - WHO strategic action and resource requirements to end the acute phase of the COVID-19 pandemic 2021
▶ 13 February	WHO - Vaccine Equity Declaration

## **Upcoming Events**

26 February	1st Finance Ministers and Central Banks Governors Meeting: "The G20 and the Global Governance for Recovery and Transformation"
27 February	1st Finance Ministers and Central Banks Governors Meeting
▶ 1-2 March	WTO General Council Meeting
▶ 3-5 March	Global Fund Partnership Forum 3 (virtual) - Regional Forum for South West Asia; East Asia and the Pacific
▶ 4 March	WHO Member States Virtual Informal Consultation on Strengthening WHO Preparedness for and Response to Health Emergencies (organized by the European Union)
▶ 8 March	International Women's Day
▶ 15 March	Global Fund Joint Global Closing of the Sixth Partnership Forums (virtual)
▶ 19 March	Comic Relief UK Red Nose Day
24 March	World Tuberculosis Day
25-26 March	2nd G20 Health Working Group meeting
April (tbc)	Munich Security Conference
7 April 2021	World Health Day
▶ 7-8 April (tb	2nd G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting
▶ 13-15 April	19th meeting of the Malaria Policy Advisory Group (MPAG)
23-26 April	One Young World Summit
▶ 25 April	World Malaria Day