

July 19, 2022

## **Readout of the COVID-19 Global Action Plan Foreign Ministerial Meeting co-hosted by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan and the Secretary of State of the United States**

As the world continues to grapple with COVID-19's far-reaching impacts and new variants, there remains an urgent need to maintain and strengthen political engagement and coordination to end the acute phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. Building on the June 15<sup>th</sup> COVID-19 Senior Officials Meeting, H.E. Hayashi Yoshimasa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan and the Honorable Antony Blinken, Secretary of State of the United States of America, convened a virtual COVID-19 Global Action Plan (GAP) Foreign Ministerial Meeting on July 19 with over 25 countries, the African Union, World Health Organization (WHO), and World Bank. Foreign ministers and senior leaders from countries, regions, and international organizations reaffirmed the need for coordinated international leadership and political will to end the acute phase of the COVID-19 pandemic and strengthen readiness for future pandemic threats.

The participants discussed the need for equitable and sustainable access to safe, effective, quality assured and affordable vaccines, diagnostics, and therapeutics as well as the actions countries can take to increase vaccine confidence.

Participants reviewed actions to support the effective production, distribution, and use of diagnostics and therapeutics. In seeking to close the financing gap for pandemic preparedness and response, participants also discussed how countries can support and fund new endeavors such as the Financial Intermediary Fund (FIF) and paths forward for mechanisms like ACT-A and COVAX.

In his remarks, Minister Hayashi reiterated the importance for the whole world to maintain and accelerate countermeasures to overcome the pandemic, and presented Japan's contributions to ensure equitable access to vaccines through financial contributions to COVAX, dose donations, and its "Last One Mile" support. Minister Hayashi emphasized the importance of the GAP which facilitates information sharing and coordination on the ground to implement assistance to meet the needs of each recipient country. He stated that we have to address the fragility in governance and financing related to global health, and strengthen the foundations for better prevention, preparedness, and response (PPR) to future health crises. He also announced Japan's decision to contribute seed-funding of 10 million USD to the FIF at the World Bank. Moreover, Minister Hayashi shared his intention to strengthen international partnerships for PPR in Africa at the 8th Tokyo International Conference on African Development on August 27-28 in Tunisia, and to actively contribute to strengthening the global health architecture as the host of the G7 Summit next year, toward the overall goal of achieving universal health coverage (UHC).

Secretary Blinken emphasized that new variants continue to pose a risk to COVID-19 response and that the world's work to end this acute phase of pandemic is not done, despite other demands and crises straining global attention. He called on GAP partners to continue advancing GAP lines of effort and to maintain high-level political attention on delivering concrete outcomes in advance of the United Nations General Assembly in September. Secretary Blinken also called on partners to improve coordination for, and equitable access to, vaccines and treatments, especially with an increased focus on the delivery of doses for boosters and increased demand and uptake for pediatric doses. Secretary Blinken urged participants to focus on the collective commitment to strengthen the global health security architecture to prevent and prepare for future health threats. He also emphasized the need to simultaneously combat other ongoing health threats, including HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria that continue to claim lives and urged countries to contribute toward the Global Fund replenishment. Lastly, he thanked partners for their support of the new FIF established with the World Bank and World Health Organization and called on other countries to contribute.

WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus reiterated alarm for rising global COVID-19 cases, applauded the establishment of a FIF at the World Bank, and the urgency of ending the acute phase of the pandemic. The Director General emphasized focusing on vaccinating all health workers, all older people, and all at-risk groups, on the way to achieving the WHO's goal of 70% vaccination coverage in all countries.

Through ministerial remarks and discussions, the participants identified the progress and remaining challenges, and reconfirmed their commitment to strengthen efforts across the GAP's six lines of effort: to get shots in arms, bolster supply chain resilience, address information gaps, support health care workers, expand access to testing and treatment, and strengthen the global health security architecture in collaboration with multilateral efforts.

Participants joining Japan and the United States in the COVID-19 Global Action Plan Foreign Ministerial Meeting included the Argentine Republic, the Commonwealth of Australia, People's Republic of Bangladesh, Belize, Canada, the Republic of Colombia, the Republic of Costa Rica, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Republic of India, the Republic of Indonesia, the State of Israel, the Italian Republic, Jamaica, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Maldives, the Kingdom of Morocco, the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Kingdom of Norway, New Zealand, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Republic of Senegal, the Republic of South Africa, the Kingdom of Spain, the Kingdom of Thailand, the United Arab Emirates, the African Union/Africa Centres for Disease Control, Heads of the World Health Organization, and the World Bank.

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