

The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister
The Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Health
The Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Foreign Affairs

June 12, 2020

Dear Deputy Prime Minister and Ministers,

RE: Funding for WHO Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator

We are writing to you ahead of the Global Pledging Summit convened by the European Commission and Global Citizen on 27 June 2020. The “Global Goal: Unite for Our Future” Summit aims to boost international collaboration and resources needed for the production, procurement and distribution of vaccines, treatments and tests for COVID-19, by funding the WHO Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A).

It is clear that the current pandemic cannot end until the development of an effective vaccine, made accessible to all, free from discrimination, irrespective of where they come from, their identity, and their ability to pay. In the meantime, early and widespread testing and equitable treatment for everyone who needs it is key to limiting the spread of the pandemic and saving lives.

Amnesty International is therefore calling on Canada to make an ambitious pledge at the summit to ensure that ACT-A is adequately funded. Any such pledges must be accompanied by a commitment to ensure that diagnostic tools, treatments and vaccines are universally available and accessible to all persons free from discrimination, within and across countries. In this regard, we encourage governments to join the COVID-19 Technology Access Pool (C-TAP) through which the patent for any effective tool would be contributed to the Medicines Patent Pool, which would then sub-license the patent to generic manufacturers.

At the same time, the pandemic has highlighted the myriad structural inequalities that exist in our global community. Analysis of the impact of COVID 19 in some countries have shown us that black, Asian and other non-white ethnic groups constitute the highest percentage of those at-risk and that marginalized groups and those with intersecting identities are at particular risk. Furthermore, people who are homeless, displaced, in prisons or immigration detention centres, living in inadequate housing or refugee camps, and working in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions – are often more likely to be at risk of contracting the virus.

As we have noted previously in Amnesty International Canada’s [ten guiding principles](#) for Canada’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic and [other documents and statements](#), we call on the Canadian government to ensure that all persons can access the full range of their human rights, including the rights to health, housing and adequate standard of living, including by providing targeted financial support to individuals where needed within the country and through international assistance for other countries who may not have the resources to guarantee these rights. Such support should be transformative, supporting a just recovery that does not contribute to further climate warming, and truly aimed not only at leaving no one behind, but enabling them to fully catch up.

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Furthermore, pledges and disbursement of funding must be accompanied by full transparency – of the source of the money and of its destination. Private companies in receipt of public funds must be required to commit to making any tools developed available on an equitable basis, and must not be allowed to price or distribute tools in a way that is discriminatory or impedes the right to health, whether nationally or across borders.

Specifically, Amnesty International is calling on all governments to:

- Analyse the current gaps in funding of the three pillars of the ACT-Accelerator and make ambitious financial pledges at the 27 June pledging summit to help fill these gaps and/or to make concrete and measurable policy pledges that will contribute to universal and equitable access to [vaccines / treatments / tools] at the earliest opportunity;
- Ensure that any pledges are not repurposed from other budget lines that support the fulfilment of human rights, within a country or for other countries - particularly international aid budgets;
- Work with other governments to develop a fully costed plan for ending the pandemic and to assess any funding gaps on a rolling basis with a view to making further pledges as necessary;
- Improve transparency requirements and put in place robust anti-corruption measures, so that recipients can be held to account for money they receive;
- Include specific provisions in agreements with private companies receiving funding through the ACT-Accelerator to ensure that resulting health products are accessible, affordable and open to all, and build this into any Advance Market Commitments that are developed. Companies should be required to provide transparent information about the actual costs they incur in development and production;
- Endorse the COVID-19 Technology Access Pool (C-TAP).

We remain at your disposal if you wish to discuss any of the issues raised above, and look forward to learning of the Canadian government's decision regarding the 27 June pledging event.

Sincerely,



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