

Geneva, 21 May 2021

Dear Global Civil Society and Affected Communities,

A year into the pandemic, diagnostics remain a critical tool even with the roll-out of vaccines. In 2021, the ACT (ACT) Accelerator Diagnostics Pillar is looking to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its support to the COVID-19 response in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) through its work across key partners, international organizations, governments, technical agencies, and civil society organizations to provide rapid and equitable access to COVID-19 diagnostic solutions.

In 2020, ACT-Accelerator's Diagnostic Pillar focused its efforts on developing a diversified portfolio of COVID-19 tests from multiple manufacturers, including automated PCR tests, open platform / manual PCR and antigen rapid tests (Ag RDTs), focusing on availability, access, and economics.

ACT-Accelerator's Diagnostic Pillar has also fast-tracked Ag RDTs access at-scale through a number of interventions which will likely have impact in the near future, including a set of agreements around technology transfer, regionalized manufacturing, and manufacturing scale-up. Moreover, ACT-Accelerator partners have supported 70+ countries in expanding laboratory infrastructure and ramping up testing through provision of technical assistance, policy/implementation guidance, and training tools. In addition, ACT-Accelerator and its partners have procured more than 70 million molecular and Ag RDTs for LMICs, providing better access and improved equity for those geographies.

While access has improved across many COVID-19 diagnostic tools in the past year, access to tests that can provide rapid results to support faster clinical management and outbreak investigations are essential. ACT-Accelerator partners recognize that due to limited alternatives for COVID-19 rapid molecular testing, there is still reliance on Cepheid SARS-CoV-2 tests for some countries. Therefore, we share the concerns being raised in the open letter from civil society organizations. As such, ACT-Accelerator is actively working to mitigate this constraint through ongoing negotiations with alternative suppliers to secure additional supply capacity and lower pricing leveraging combined scale. Supporting development and launch of new molecular products is a priority of the pillar, and we have committed ACT-Accelerator pledged resources to work on this as the next product priority.

In response to the asks in the open letter, the ACT-Accelerator Diagnostic Pillar commits to pursue several actions, which include but are not limited to:

- a. Continue negotiations with Cepheid to increase the allocation and secure more favorable terms for GeneXpert SARS-CoV-2 tests for LMICs.
- b. Across diagnostic tests and going forward for any new tests, develop a standardized COGS methodology to feed into discussions on fair pricing.
- c. In partnership with countries, specialized agencies, and civil society organizations, support, accelerate and coordinate rollout of innovations in the rapid molecular testing pipeline, as well as other testing modalities, including prequalification / emergency use listing, country readiness and national scale-up. In addition, grow and strengthen FIND's existing academic clinical evaluation lab network.

- d. Continue engagements with countries and other relevant actors on a diversification strategy for COVID-19 testing at national and community levels, leveraging the full portfolio of COVID-19 diagnostic tools.

Across all these interventions, we welcome the participation of civil society organizations – we value your partnership and collaboration in our shared goals for equitable access to diagnostics and look forward to continuing our work together.

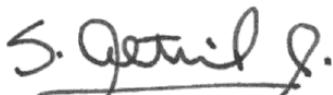
Signed, on behalf of the ACT-A Diagnostics Pillar:



Peter Sands
ACT-A Diagnostic Pillar co-convenor;
Executive Director, The Global Fund to Fight AIDS,
Tuberculosis and Malaria



Dr Hanan Balkhy
WHO Diagnostics Pillar Lead;
Assistant Director General AMR World
Health Organization



Sergio Carmona
ACT-A Diagnostic Pillar co-convenor;
Acting Chief Executive Officer & Chief Medical Officer,
The Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics
