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## **Making health a global public good: an impossible mission for the G20**

The final declarations of the most recent G20 meetings are highly disappointing, and their commitments will fall short of solving global challenges. Almost two months ago, following the meeting of G20 Health Ministers, Global Health Advocates condemned the lack of concrete measures to end the Covid-19 pandemic. With the Italian Presidency of the G20 coming to an end, neither the joint Finance and Health Ministerial meeting, nor the meeting of Heads of State, proposed a means to ensure equitable access to tools to fight the pandemic.

Covid-19 has been spreading for almost two years, and despite the enormous progress made in understanding this novel virus and developing ways to protect against and treat it, the situation is still far from being under control. The milestone of 5 million deaths has passed, and it is certain that as long as everyone is not protected, the threat of new variants and the pandemic resurging will continue to threaten the entire planet.

Thus it is dismaying to see the final declaration of the Heads of State only renewed the commitments already made. **Reiterating that Covid-19 tools are a “global public good” is not enough to make them accessible.** This will not happen without a drastic strengthening of international cooperation and action-oriented solidarity. **The lack of an adequate response to this ongoing crisis demonstrates the inability of the international community to rise to the challenges.** Although the EU was one of the founders of the ACT-Accelerator (a global collaboration mechanism to accelerate development, production, and equitable access to Covid-19 tools), and has been exporting vaccines against covid-19 to the rest of the world, including through dose-donations, the EU has continued to slow down and disturb the negotiations around the TRIPS waiver. It acted as an active opponent of the waiver without proposing a feasible and effective alternative. The EU's counter-proposal presented at WTO is too narrow in scope and relies on existing measures that are not fit for this pandemic. Above all, it depends on a voluntary will of the health industry, whose interest is not fully aligned with actual public health needs. The EU also failed to meet its “fair share” to the ACT-Accelerator’s funding claims for the 2020-2021 period, and now has the opportunity to reaffirm its leadership in the second financing case.

Overall, world leaders have failed in this G20 Summit when it comes to global health issues. But there is still time to fully seize the other opportunities that will allow transformative decisions to overcome the challenge of Covid-19. On November 11, 2021, the Council of the European Union (Foreign Affairs/Trade) will gather to talk about WTO reform and prepare for the coming 12th WTO Ministerial Conference. **We call on the EU to commit to the TRIPs waiver,**

**fully-fund ACT-A, and ensure global health is well-represented in other policy processes, such as the programming of the next 7-year budget.**

On this occasion, the EU can ensure that all States are able to prevent, identify and deal with new spreads of Covid-19. To do this, the EU will have to reiterate its commitment to universal equitable access to Covid-19 tools, an essential prerequisite for the notion of global public good, and:

**- Put the public interest at the heart of the Covid-19 response:**

The contribution of private sector actors must be questioned so that they effectively contribute to making Covid-19 tools equitably accessible. In the spirit of the ACT-A charter, the adoption of a more restrictive code of conduct must now guarantee transparency on costs, prices, stocks, means of production, rates, and conditions of supply for tests, treatments, and vaccines against Covid-19. States, international organisations, and multinational companies must be accountable for their actions against the pandemic. The pharmaceutical industry has the responsibility to support the negotiations underway at the WTO to temporarily lift the patents which hinder the development of production capacities and the transfer of technologies and know-how. Without this, only the goodwill of pharmaceutical companies will continue to govern the access and capacity of States to produce these vital tools, locking the international community into the model of charity to which no one aspires for the long term.

**- Fund solidarity efforts to make access to Covid-19 tools universal and equitable:**

The EU was involved in the evaluation of the ACT-A system which led to the presentation of a new strategy and a new budget. It must now take its fair share in financing the identified needs. At the same time, in order to respond to this pandemic and prepare for the next one, innovative health financing is needed to make it possible to sustainably finance the strengthening of health systems, and in particular of primary care in the poorest countries.