



COVID GAP

Led by Duke University and COVID Collaborative

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Urgent Changes Needed to Shift Global Pandemic Response to Sustainable Long-Term COVID-19 Control, Improve Health System Resilience and Preparedness

A new report from COVID Global Accountability Platform, with input from experts in low-and middle-income countries, recommends bottom-up, country-led responses for a more equitable recovery, aiming to quickly vaccinate 90 percent of at-risk people

Durham, NC | March 28, 2022 – COVID Global Accountability Platform (COVID GAP), a partnership between Duke University and COVID Collaborative, released a report today calling for an urgent shift in the global pandemic strategy in light of the rapid spread of the Omicron variant, availability of new treatments, and the humanitarian crises stemming from Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

Written in consultation with close to 50 leading health experts from low- and middle-income countries, [**A Path Forward**](#) calls for rapid change from emergency crisis management to a sustainable control strategy that also helps to build resilient health systems better prepared to address future COVID-19 outbreaks and other public health threats. The report urges commitment to bottom-up approaches whereby countries focus efforts on protecting the most at-risk and vulnerable people, including health and other essential workers. This commitment would include immediately prioritizing the vaccination of 90 percent of those most at-risk, rather than the global 70 percent population vaccination target, while ensuring equitable access to tests and treatments. The report was supported with funding from The Rockefeller Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

“COVID-19 will be with us for a long time, and while the virus does not discriminate, our strategies and response have,” said **Dr. Krishna Udayakumar, founding Director of the Duke Global Health Innovation Center**. “This report offers guidance on how to move us to a sustainable path forward – backed by a strong commitment to support country-driven goals and ensure equitable access to all COVID-19 tools.”

The authors outline four priority actions to be backed by national leaders, health and development organizations, donors, civil society organizations, and the private sector:

1. **Support country-driven goals** that reflect local realities and priorities, with global support to allow countries to unlock the resources needed to achieve national goals;
2. **Refocus vaccination goals** away from vaccinating 70 percent of all adults by summer to vaccinating 90 percent of those most at-risk in each country;
3. **Provide equitable access to oral antivirals** through test-and-treat capabilities integrated into “vaccination plus” strategies, amidst growing evidence that the durability of many current COVID-19 vaccines is limited;

4. **Increase local manufacturing capabilities and production** in low- and middle-income countries for vaccines, therapies, tests, and other critical health tools – a significant long-term commitment that must address access to intellectual property, technology and knowledge, human resources, robust supply chains, and financial capital.

The report further notes the need for high-quality data at national and sub-national levels to drive accountability, as well as robust financing and improved governance to enable a successful global response. The authors also highlight the importance of a flexible multilateral response that maximizes limited resources by addressing the highest-priority needs first, including by redirecting or reallocating funding across initiatives and organizations.

"We are still in the middle of a pandemic where inequity is the order of the day. Everyone has not benefitted equally from the lifesaving tools we have at our disposal, including vaccines, treatments, non-pharmaceutical kits and tests" said **Dr. Isaac Adewole, Professor at University of Ibadan and former Minister of Health, Nigeria**. "Countries should attend to health issues comprehensively and with urgent attention. There is no place for exceptionalism any longer. We must shift quickly to long-term approaches in handling the pandemic with sustainable strategies that build stronger health systems. National leaders need better access to the resources to act. This is exactly what COVID GAP calls for in *A Path Forward*. The time for action is now."

"The COVID-19 pandemic has severely affected the world, and has shown us that there are many things to change globally. We have to seize this moment, we need to start looking for the 'Path Forward' applying what we have learned to redirect our efforts globally to be better prepared for what comes next," said **Dr. Patricia Garcia, Professor at Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia and former Minister of Health, Peru**. "We need to be more resilient, we need to work on the meaning and practice of the word 'solidarity,' and we need to find ways to assure equitable access to supplies, vaccines, and medications."

"A post-Omicron global strategy should build on the world's successes, learn from its failures, and respond to dynamic conditions on the ground, as outlined in our report," said **Mr. Gary Edson, President of COVID Collaborative and former US Deputy National Security Advisor and Deputy National Economic Advisor**. "The greater the delay in adapting to new realities, the higher the cost in lives, health, and economic prosperity."

"While COVID-19 has ushered in a phase of unprecedented scientific achievements and progress, political failures and deep inequities have prolonged the emergency," said **Dr. Bruce Gellin, Chief of Global Public Health Strategy at The Rockefeller Foundation**. "COVID GAP's report hits the nail on the head: we need a flexible, bottom-up approach to addressing COVID-19 during this next phase. We're proud to support in-country collaborations like this to achieve our shared mission of bringing the pandemic under control and to an eventual end."

Bringing together diverse voices from around the world to highlight collectively urgent actions needed to shift the global pandemic strategy, COVID GAP and the Pandemic Action Network will co-host a public convening on Tuesday, March 29 with Africa CDC; African Population and Health Research Center; Amref Health Africa; Andean Health Organization; Center for Indonesia's Strategic Development Initiatives; College of Medicine, University of Ibadan; the ONE Campaign; School of Public Health, Cayetano Heredia University; and WACI Health.

To register for the event, please click here.

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About COVID GAP

The COVID Global Accountability Platform (COVID GAP), led by Duke University and COVID Collaborative, aims to improve and accelerate global pandemic response by serving as an independent source of insights and actionable recommendations, convening key stakeholders to galvanize actions and collaborations, and strengthening transparency and accountability. Find out more:

<https://COVID19gap.org>.

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