

**Ensuring Equitable Access to Life-saving Immunizations in the time of Covid-19**  
**High-level side event organized by GAVI, WHO and IFRC**  
**75<sup>th</sup> UNGA, 9:30 am- 11:00 am, 23 September 2020**

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**Excellencies, ladies, and gentlemen,**

Let me begin by thanking the organizers for this event.

The Covid-19 pandemic is a stark reminder that the world is interconnected, and we all have a stake in addressing this global public health challenge together. If we want to prevent a recurrence, we need to prepare, prevent, and recover together. One of the preventive actions is vaccination, the importance of which cannot be more emphasized. We are happy that several vaccine trials are close to developing an effective and safe vaccine. This could be the breakthrough that we were all waiting for.

**Excellencies,**

Covid-19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted the already marginalized groups in our societies; many of them have been facing devastating consequences. On the other hand, our societies are suffering from its socioeconomic impacts due to long shut down to limit the spread of Covid-19. These impacts threaten to reverse decades of hard-won development gains and jeopardize the accelerated progress now needed to achieve the SDGs, leading to further inequalities.

Last year, at the UN, our leaders committed to Universal Health Coverage (UHC) everywhere, for all citizens. But this unprecedented health crisis provides us with an opportunity to work to accomplish their commitments. To achieve universal coverage of the Covid-19 vaccine, we must act now to ensure that the vaccines are available equitably to all countries that needed these most. Achieving equity, however, would mean affordability, accessibility, and widespread availability of the vaccines. If we can advance the mass distribution of an effective vaccine, not only would we save many lives, but the effort would also hasten the economic recovery.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

Bangladesh has been a global success story for vaccination. Hon'ble Prime Minister has been honoured with 'Vaccine Hero' award last year for her contribution and commitment towards

availability of vaccines and ensuring UHC. Bangladesh joined other countries to support the 'Access to Covid-19 Tools' (ACT) initiative to fast-track global access to safe, quality, effective, and affordable Covid-19 related products. Bangladesh also has extended support to another critical initiative like COVAX Facility, which addresses innovative financing and procurement mechanisms to ensure that low-income countries can obtain Covid -19 vaccines. Through these, we can ensure that 'no one is left behind' in the fight against Covid -19.

**Excellencies, ladies, and gentlemen,**

The spirit of collaboration has been the key to the Covid-19 response. Nobody is safe until everyone is safe. As we recover and rebuild, only a sustained focus on realizing the rights of the marginalized can set us on a path towards effective Covid-19 recovery.

Our collective success, therefore, hinges on supporting vulnerable people and low-income countries in a way that upholds equity and promotes greater resilience to such future crises.

I thank you all.