

**Video statement
by Olaf Scholz,
Chancellor of the Federal Republic of
Germany,**

**at the Global COVID-19 “Biden” Summit
on 12 May 2022**

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President Biden,
Vice President Harris,
Co-hosts and colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

A well-known quote says that “Perception is reality”.

But the COVID-19 pandemic is proving this wrong.

Our perception might be that COVID is over. Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine has overtaken the pandemic in the headlines. And after more than two long years, people are simply tired of hearing and reading about COVID.

But the dire reality is: the pandemic is not over! More than 6.2°million people around the world have died from COVID 19.

That's about the entire population of Singapore or Denmark. And every day more people are dying.

Current outbreaks and new variants of concern show the risk of prolonging the pandemic even further.

For many countries – especially in the global South – this is a disaster. Because the pandemic comes on top of other serious challenges, such as food shortages, rising energy prices and the effects of climate change. As a result, global debt and inflation are increasing rapidly.

So, what is needed?

The short answer is: money.

The ACT-Accelerator [*Äkt-Äkzelereytor*] must remain our top priority.

As the holder of the G7 Presidency, Germany wants to lead by example: For 2022, we are contributing another 1.5°billion US-dollars – increasing our support since 2020 to 3.5 billion. In addition, we have already donated 145 million vaccine doses.

Recently, we hosted the COVAX financing conference together with Gavi. This raised a total of 4.8°billion US-dollars.

But there is still a significant funding gap, which we must close together.

This is why we are here today.

Secondly: We must recognize that reality has changed.

In 2021, we were short of vaccines.

In 2022, we have the vaccines, but we are lagging behind on vaccinations.

We therefore need to strengthen absorption capacities – especially in countries with weak healthcare systems.

As part of our “Last Mile Initiative”, Germany will provide 850°million euro to our partner countries – especially in Africa and the Middle East.

Thirdly: We need to look beyond the current crisis.

In order to be better prepared in the future, we must strengthen the World Health Organisation and its coordinating role.

The good news is, that the WHO Working Group on Sustainable Financing has just reached an agreement to put the WHO programme budget on a more solid financial footing.

This will enable the organization to carry out its important job more effectively.

Fourthly: We need more local production of vaccines – against COVID, and in the longer term, against other diseases such as malaria or ebola.

Germany is currently investing more than 500°million euro to expand local vaccine and medical manufacturing in Africa.

Our pharmaceutical industry has stepped up its commitments as well.

But we also rely on your continued support via Gavi, the Global Fund and other multilateral instruments.

Finally, we need ongoing support to build resilient healthcare systems.

This is where President Biden's initiative comes in.

We support your proposal, dear Joe, to set up a new fund for pandemic preparedness at the World Bank, operating in close cooperation with the WHO.

And I am happy to announce today that – subject to parliamentary approval – Germany will contribute an initial 50 million euro.

We look forward to working with you on setting up the fund and turning it into a global success story.

So, thank you all for joining us today.

Together, we can make this summit a success!
By taking action, we can change reality.