



ECOSOC

United Nations Economic and Social Council

TAKING ACTION TO IMPROVE LIVES

**Opening statement by H.E. Mr. Munir Akram, President of
UN ECOSOC**

Special High-level Meeting on “A Vaccine for all”

New York, April 16, 2021

Excellencies, distinguish delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I welcome you all to this special Ministerial meeting of the Economic and Social Council on ‘A vaccine for all’.

This event is the time to take stock of our endeavor to defeat the Covid-19 pandemic and to try to identify concrete actions into address gaps.

Covid-19 is the most severe health and economic crisis, world has faced in the century.

Vaccines offer our best hope in addressing this pandemic and overcoming it.

We have all expressed solidarity, unity in the face of this pandemic.

We need to match this expression of solidarity with actions. Access to vaccines reflect and inherent inequality in the world.

Some have vaccinated, close to 40% of the population. Asia, Africa, and Latin America are far behind with some having vaccinated, only to 1-3% of their populations, and some none at all.

In addition to being a moral imperative, universal coverage by the vaccines is the only realistic option to ending the pandemic.

We need to ramp up production. We need to address the issues of intellectual property and flexibilities.

We need to address the funding gap, and especially the funding gap of the Act accelerator and the COVAX facility.

We need to find ways to support the weak health systems and infrastructure of the developing countries.

We need to remove obstacles such as export restrictions and vaccine nationalism.

We have to take some decisive steps towards universal vaccination in order to end the pandemic, which is a prerequisite for economic recovery.

I look forward to our discussions.

We hope that our efforts today will lead to some conclusions and actions.