BIVDA
British In Vitro Diagnostics Association

BIVDA Round-Up of the G7 Summit - Health and Diagnostics

The UK's G7 Presidency

The United Kingdom acted as the host country of the G7 Summit from the 11th to 13th June 2021. The events took place in Carbis Bay, Cornwall and was the first in-person summit of G7 nations in almost two years. Prime Minister Boris Johnson aimed to use the G7 to increase co-operation between the world's most advanced and technologically developed nations. To that end, three major world players were invited as guests to this year's G7 event; Australia, India and South Korea. The overarching theme of the summit was "building back better from coronavirus and create a greener, more prosperous future".

G7 Lead-Up and Health Ministers' Meeting

A reference was made to diagnostics in the jointly agreed 'Leaders Statement' published after a G7 leader meeting in February 2021:
"We reaffirm our support for all pillars of the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A), its COVAX facility, and affordable and equitable access to vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics, reflecting the role of extensive immunisation as a global public good."
At this meeting, leaders recognised that no country can be safe until every country is safe and collectively committed over US $4.3 billion to the ACT Accelerator partnership to develop and distribute effective tests, treatments, and vaccines around the world.

A two-day G7 health ministers' meeting took place in Oxford where the following was decided

- pledges were made to improve the early identification zoonotic viruses (animal to human infections), which account for three-fifths of all infections.
- 19,000 disease detectives are being recruited in over 80 countries to help tackle outbreaks before they become epidemics.
- The UK Government announced a collaboration with the life sciences industry to protect against future pandemic threats and slash time to develop and deploy new

diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines to 100 days. Companies that have backed the ambition of the 100 Days Mission set out by the pandemic preparedness partnership include: Pfizer, Novartis, Sanofi, GlaxoSmithKline, AstraZeneca and Thermo Fisher Scientific.

- The ministers recognised the importance of infection prevention and control (IPC) measures to tackle AMR. Supply-chain strengthening, cross-disciplinary measures and innovation in R&D for alternative antimicrobials. The is part of the 'Build Back Better' policy, taking a 'One Health' approach.
- Regarding digital health, renewed focus must be put onto data governance, system security, privacy, regulatory and data protection standards. Artificial Intelligence (AI) governance, as well as the interoperability of health systems and testing data/vaccination records were highlighted as significant areas of digital health.

The *Carbis Bay Progress Report* was published on 3rd June and provides evidence that since 2015, G7 members have helped expand access to vaccines, supported developing countries to train, recruit and retain health workers, and assisted more than 70 countries to stop infectious disease outbreaks from spreading.

G7 Summit Conclusions - diagnostics and life sciences

The summit concluded with commitments made to "create the appropriate frameworks to strengthen our collective defences against threats to global health by increasing and coordinating on global manufacturing capacity on all continents; improving early warning systems; and support science in a mission to shorten the cycle for the development of safe and effective vaccines, treatments and tests from 300 to 100 days."

In a bid to end the pandemic in 2022, 60% of the world's population will need vaccination, the concluding G7 statement says. Support for ACT-A and its COVAX facility will be the "primary route" for the vaccination of poorer countries. Regarding diagnostics, the G7 commit to an

"end-to-end approach to boost supply of COVID-19 tools, including vaccines, raw materials, tests, therapeutics, and personal protective equipment (PPE)". This will be based on the principles of open trade and backed up by a pragmatic approach to break down bottlenecks which are holding the fight against COVID-19 back.

To stay ahead of the virus, investment in R&D will be crucial. Genomic sequencing, better tests and global surveillance must be made available and used. G7 countries have now been asked to extend their level of genomic sequencing to "at least 10 per cent of all new positive COVID-19 samples during the pandemic phase and share genomic sequencing information with existing global databases." Regarding the G7's overall pandemic-avoidance commitment, this will be aligned through a "One Health" approach across all aspects of pandemic prevention and preparedness, "recognising the critical links between human and animal health and the environment."

Addressing climate change, the group committed to net zero no later than 2050, halving collective emissions over the two decades to 2030, increasing and improving climate finance to 2025, and to conserve or protect at least 30% of Earth's land and oceans by 2030.

Looking forward

2021 is an important year for the United Kingdom and the G7 is not the only major gathering. In February, the country assumed the presidency of the UN Security Council, and it will also be hosting the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow this November. Pandemic preparedness (including diagnostics) and global public health protection are likely to be standing agenda points for summits into the future.

BIVDA has released a strategy paper in consultation with IVD industry figures called 'Emerging from the Pandemic'. The paper was provided to policy makers to ensure that the breakthroughs, experience, collaboration and infrastructural changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic are capitalised upon to access innovation and manufacturing capacity to

support the control of a future pandemic and to continue to deliver a comprehensive healthcare environment in the UK.

Recommendations are made on the future use of Lighthouse Laboratories, encouraging faster adoption of new products, research and development as well as a task force on the allocation of testing equipment. BIVDA has offered the support of the IVD industry to the upcoming COP26 gathering and responded to the G7 Communiqué regarding antimicrobial resistance.

In the fight against AMR, BIVDA hopes that the significant role of diagnostics in reducing the use of unnecessary antibiotics in not overlooked. “Diagnostics should be given the same focus as new drugs so we can develop tests to help direct therapeutic use and avoid the use of antibiotics where possible”, said BIVDA Chief Executive Doris-Ann Williams MBE. The IVD industry stands ready to contribute to the achievement of goals regarding pandemic preparedness, environmental sustainability and combatting AMR set out by international collaborations such as the G7.