



Opening remarks by President von der Leyen at the Coronavirus Global Response international pledging event

Brussels, 4 May 2020

Good afternoon, good morning and good evening to everyone watching around the world.

I am delighted to open and welcome you to the Coronavirus Global Response pledging event.

I believe 4 May 2020 will mark a turning point in our fight against the coronavirus. Because today, the world is coming together – governments from every continent will join hands and team up with global health organisations and other experienced partners. The partners are many, the goal is one: to defeat this virus.

The pandemic is affecting every single country in the world. It has brought heartache and heartbreak, pain and suffering to millions of people. It has put enormous strain on healthcare and welfare systems across the globe. It has shut down public life in many parts of the world – keeping us away from our families, friends and the things we love. It has badly hit our economy, putting jobs, livelihoods and businesses at risk.

But it has also brought the best out of humanity. Our modern day heroes are now our healthcare workers. Small acts of solidarity, love and kindness are spreading around the world. And this virus has reminded us that we have to protect each other if we want to protect ourselves.

The reality is that we will have to learn to live with the virus – until and unless we develop a vaccine.

This is why we have to join forces and pool our money and our minds to kick-start work on vaccines, diagnostics and treatments against coronavirus. We need to develop, produce and deploy them to every single corner of the world. And we must ensure that they are available and affordable for all.

This is why we must all chip in to finance this truly global endeavour. So our first objective is to raise an initial sum of EUR 7.5 billion, or USD 8 billion. This is the funding that is needed right now to ramp up work on vaccines, diagnostics and treatments.

But more will be needed. So, today is only the start of a global pledging marathon.

The second objective is to bring under the same roof all global health organisations working on initiatives to fight the pandemic. Together, we offer to the world a framework for global cooperation on vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics.

I am so grateful to all the governments that are joining us to present their pledges. Particularly to the G20 Presidency – Saudi Arabia – for its tireless work to place this issue high on the G20's agenda and to reach out, to make today's event successful.

I am also grateful to the other countries that are co-leading this effort together with the European Union. Thank you, France, Germany, Japan, Norway, Canada, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom.

I am also delighted that experienced global health organisations and foundations join forces with us. They bring valuable expertise and strength.

And now, let us give them the resources they need. Let us start the pledging!

And I am delighted to get the ball rolling by announcing the European Commission's contribution.

The European Commission mobilises EUR 1 billion for the Coronavirus Global Response.

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