



ACT-Accelerator

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Why in News

Carl Bildt has been appointed as **WHO Special Envoy** for the **Access to Covid-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-Accelerator)**.

The ACT-Accelerator is a groundbreaking **global collaboration** to accelerate development, production, and equitable access to **Covid-19 tests, treatments and vaccines**.

Key Points

- **ACT-Accelerator:**
 - It was launched in the month of April, 2020 at an event co-hosted by the Director-General of the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, the **President of France**, the **President of the European Commission**, and the **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**.
 - It brings together **governments, scientists, businesses, civil society, and philanthropists** and **global health organizations**.
 - The participants include the **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**, **CEPI**, **Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics (FIND)**, **Gavi**, **The Global Fund**, **Unitaid**, **Wellcome Trust (London)**, the **WHO** and the **World Bank**.
 - It aims to **end the pandemic, restore full societal and economic activity** globally and **facilitate high-level control of Covid-19 disease**.
 - The ACT-Accelerator is organized into **four pillars of work**:
 - **Diagnostics, treatment, vaccines** and **health system strengthening**.
 - Each pillar is vital to the overall effort and involves innovation and collaboration.

- **COVAX:**

- COVAX is one of four pillars of the ACT Accelerator.
 - It is an effort to ensure that **people in all corners of the world will get access to Covid-19 vaccines**, regardless of their wealth.
 - The initial aim is to have **2 billion doses available by the end of 2021**, which should be enough to protect high risk and vulnerable people, as well as frontline healthcare workers.
 - It is co-led by **Gavi, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) and the World Health Organisation (WHO)**, working in partnership with vaccine manufacturers of developed and developing countries.
 - **India's Role:**
 - India has **started shipping Covid-19 vaccines to Africa** under the COVAX facility.
 - Earlier, **Serum Institute of India (SII) had received funds** from Gavi and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation **to double its supply of Covid-19 vaccines** (200 million doses) to India and other poorer countries as part of the **Gavi COVAX facility**.
- **Significance of ACT-Accelerator:**
 - It is a crucial time for ACT-Accelerator when the world is rolling out vaccines against Covid-19, introducing new diagnostics and scaling up life-saving oxygen and **corticosteroids** for severe disease.
 - It will help in addressing the uneven distribution of vaccines globally and the emergence of new variants of concern.

Corticosteroids

- Corticosteroids are a class of drug that **lowers inflammation in the body**. They also reduce immune system activity.
- Corticosteroids **ease swelling, itching, redness, and allergic reactions**, thus used in the treatment of diseases like asthma, arthritis, lupus, allergies etc.
- Corticosteroids resemble cortisol, a **hormone naturally produced by the body's adrenal glands**. The body needs cortisol to stay healthy.
 - Cortisol is a major player in a wide range of processes in the body, including metabolism, immune response, and stress.

Source: DTE