



## Commentary to the Global COVID-19 Summit: Ending the Pandemic and Building Back Better

September 15, 2021

Dear Honorable and Esteemed Leaders,

On behalf of the Sabin Vaccine Institute (Sabin), I am honored to have the opportunity to participate in the *Global COVID-19 Summit: Ending the Pandemic and Building Back Better*. Global leadership is essential to end the COVID-19 pandemic and to help prevent the next pandemic. Sabin is committed to working alongside you to support the three primary goals of this Summit.

Sabin strives to follow the lived example of Dr. Albert B Sabin – to catalyze development of vaccines to combat global health threats, and to connect the knowledge and real-life experiences of those at the forefront of vaccinating the world with the resources and policies they need to deliver shots into arms. Most importantly, as Dr. Sabin did, we believe in equitable access to vaccines for all people, everywhere.

We applaud the decades of innovation and partnership that laid the groundwork for unprecedented collaboration in COVID-19 vaccine R&D and the tireless work to immunize billions of people. However, Sabin joins our partners in committing to push for dramatically increased supply and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) and better collaboration to end this pandemic and reverse the backslide in routine immunizations.

To support access, Sabin is working with local, regional and national immunization professionals in LMICs as they develop and execute nationwide COVID-19 vaccination campaigns.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, many countries did not have nearly enough funding or health system capacity for routine immunizations, resulting in massive workforce and infrastructure gaps in COVID-19 vaccination campaigns and delays in vaccination. Part of this Summit's goal to Build Back Better should include substantial investment in sustainable routine immunization in LMICs, in conjunction with COVID-19 vaccine introduction, to expand access to vaccines and prepare for the next pandemic.

These investments can only reach their potential if policymakers and public health leaders continually learn and apply lessons from immunization leaders closest to communities.

We commit to continuing to learn from [Sabin's Boost Community](#) – a global network of more than 1,700 immunization professionals in 130 countries from the sub-county to national level to improve vaccine uptake. We also commit through our [Vaccine Acceptance and Demand](#) initiative to deepening our understanding of the complex social and behavioral drivers of vaccine acceptance by learning from and connecting researchers, health workers and journalists in LMICs, and sharing that local knowledge to influence policy.

Margaret Odera, a community health worker living with HIV in the Mathare slum in Nairobi, Kenya, recently shared with us on a [podcast for our Immunization Advocates program](#) about the fear COVID-19 instilled in her life. Fear of what losing her paid position would mean for her family, fear the pandemic's restrictions would impact her partner's ability to work, and fear of what becoming ill or dying of COVID-19 would mean for her family. But she also spoke of relief and hope – the relief she felt when she received her COVID-19 vaccination, and the hope that a successful polio vaccination campaign in her community could springboard a COVID-19 vaccine rollout to help end the fear this pandemic has caused in Kenya once adequate supply was delivered.

Our collective efforts to date have been woefully inadequate to equitably vaccinate the world from COVID-19 – especially in prioritizing vaccine delivery to all health workers and people most vulnerable to severe disease in LMICs.

The scale of the challenge to manufacture and equitably distribute COVID-19 vaccines to all and some of the solutions to meet the challenge are well-documented in the Pandemic Action Network's (PAN) [Global Roadmap to Vaccinate](#) the World and the World Health Organization's [Vaccine Equity Declaration](#), both of which Sabin supports.

When desperately needed vaccines are finally made available to all communities, those millions of lifesaving doses run the risk of remaining in vials if leaders don't immediately step up to fund and focus on the needs of the people delivering immunizations, the knowledge to understand and improve vaccine acceptance, and the application of knowledge to optimize vaccine uptake.

Sabin is committed to furthering the goals put forth by this Summit by listening to and elevating the voices of community leaders like Margaret and working to secure much-needed substantial investment in sustainable routine immunization. We thank you again for this opportunity to contribute to the Summit, and we urge you to listen to and act upon insights from local immunization professionals as we work together to end this pandemic and to make the world better prepared for the next.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy Finan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Amy Finan  
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