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I now turn to you Dr. Juliette Tuakli, from whom I expect an African perspective.

Juliette Tuakli

When the Covid-19 pandemic first began, two issues became very obvious to some of us located on the African continent. One, the West seemed to have huge capacity but little strategy and we in Africa had a lot of strategy and little capacity. Second, was the importance of health as an important national strategic asset within our economies. As has been mentioned, the pandemic highlighted health inequities that had been ongoing, also other systemic weaknesses such as insufficiencies, ineffective and unequal national health systems. In addition, there were weak regional and domestic financing arrangements with which to procure appropriate medicines and vaccines along with the presence of highly asynchronous health regulatory policies throughout the African continent. Each country on the continent had a different system from the other with variable levels of regulation. It was difficult initially to work effectively together. There was however also a recognition that having already dealt successfully with Ebola, Africa and how it responded to the Covid pandemic, required continued important strategic shifts in its health governance. We were slowly acquiring and recognising what might be called a soft rather than hard power in negotiating around health governance issues, globally.

The role of philanthropists and civic societies in the health arena was also enormously important. United Way Worldwide, which I chair, raised over a USD 1 billion during the course of the past one and a half years, helping over 27 million people who were affected by the pandemic. This was not just in health but allied to broader health needs. Yesterday, Honourable Aminata Touré mentioned the recognition by Africa of Africans' own capabilities and the prior lack thereof of confidence in recognizing that it was now time for we Africans to engage in manufacturing our own medical pharmaceuticals and start developing medical programs and policies that work for us specifically.

In addition, looking at the global stage, it is important that it is not just that we partner with other groups and agencies, but that we have an equal status within such relationships. There has to be some equity in the partnerships hereon in terms of health and health governance, for us to be able to effectively be part of the solution, not just part of the problem within Africa regarding global health. The local manufacture of pharmaceuticals has already begun. I must

give a nod to the Louis Pasteur Institute in Senegal which has been doing enormous and very impressive work and serves as a beacon for many others. We also need more strategic investment locally in some of our public health initiatives in situ rather than externally. When one looks at the ratio of monies actually given to Africa compared with what was raised by the world, we have actually received very little from the COVAX initiative. Africa has received one-fifth of the vaccines that were originally pledged. While people may slight us for not having vaccinated sufficient numbers of people on the continent, one must remember that we have not received anywhere near as many vaccines as were promised nor anticipated.

Finally, I wish to note that the Pandemic afforded an opportunity for recognition of the important roles of Africa's diaspora in various capacities and roles. We have partnered in many of the global health initiatives that have occurred on the continent. We are moving into important areas that impact global health governance, particularly in Africa, for example my friend and sister, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala now heading the World Trade Organization. I must also cite locally placed members of the African diaspora such as Dr. John Nkengasong who ran an enormously effective African CDC on the continent itself and was largely responsible for the efficiency with which we were able to work in Africa dealing with this pandemic. Then of course, I have also been active in both the medical and philanthropic arenas, coordinating both. However, there are many more of us and I think that we must be recognized more just as Africans themselves need to be recognized, positively, in the global health arena.

Michel Kazatchkine

Thank you very much, Juliette and thank you for emphasizing how remarkably Africa as a continent came together in building the response. Also, thank you for focusing on how partnerships, be they private, public or private/public and of course, when it comes to governance at the global level, it should be inclusive from the start. That is certainly a lesson that we had learned before from HIV, SARS and Ebola, but had not taken.