The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has provoked a health and development crisis in many countries. This is a reflection of fragility and weakness in their health systems, and reinforces the critical need for health system strengthening and preparedness. Current efforts to deliver COVID-19 vaccines bring to fore the vital importance of ensuring equitable access to, and delivery of, essential medicines, vaccines and diagnostic tools to address global health challenges.

Even while tackling the pandemic, it remains vitally important to ensure that health priorities – such as those related to combating tuberculosis (TB), malaria and neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) – are not at risk of neglect. These endemic diseases persist in many low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) and impose a devastating human, social and economic burden, predominantly among the most vulnerable, marginalized populations. It is crucial to adopt measures to mitigate the reversal in progress towards the targets of ending the epidemics of TB, malaria and NTDs.

Strengthened institutional and technical capacities drive access to and delivery of affordable and quality-assured medicines, vaccines and diagnostic tools, and in promoting coherent approaches to building resilient health systems and sustaining universal health coverage. They are key, not only in tackling the COVID-19 pandemic, but also towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goal 3 (SDG3) targets of universal health coverage (UHC) and ending the persistent established epidemics of TB, malaria and NTDs.

What we do

ADP helps countries to develop essential policies, human capacities, systems and regulations to ensure access and delivery of health technologies in accordance with national needs and priorities.

To help countries address evolving health challenges, ADP is prioritizing efforts towards supporting national responses to COVID-19, while continuing to build capacities to combat TB, malaria and NTDs. In doing so, ADP will facilitate the scale up of digital health solutions and South-South exchange and collaboration (see back page for more information).

Since its inception, ADP partners have been guided by three implementation approaches:

**Strengthening policy, regulatory harmonization and coherence**

A coherent approach towards the selection, prioritization and use of health technologies will enable health technologies to reach people who need them faster. The national regulatory system must also operate in coordination with the procurement and supply chain management systems to facilitate swift access to quality assured health technologies. ADP works with focus countries and across regions to enable joined-up approaches across these areas.

**Strengthening institutions for accelerating health technology introduction and access**

In many countries, there is an urgent need to strengthen the skills, capacities and functions of institutions to support the effective introduction and uptake of new health technologies. Working with countries to identify specific needs and priorities, ADP partners draw on their expertise and experience to help strengthen these capacities, addressing critical gaps within national health systems including on preparedness during public health emergencies.

**Establishing and contributing to regional and global platforms for technology delivery preparedness**

ADP in-country implementation experience provides a source of learning, enabling partners to identify opportunities for South-South exchange so countries can learn from one another. In addition, ADP collaborates with the Global Health Innovative Technology (GHIT) Fund and other partners to promote collaboration and synergy in health technology innovation to help to address bottlenecks in the development and uptake of new health technologies.
AMPLIFYING IMPACT
at the country and regional levels

A snapshot of the key results and achievements of the ADP during 2019-2020

Senegal

• Strengthened technical capacities of relevant national agencies to conduct health technology assessment (HTA) to improve decision-making in the selection of new health technologies.
• Facilitated the self-benchmarking of the national regulatory authority (NRA) in preparation for the formal WHO assessment, and strengthened regulatory oversight for medical products including inspection of the pharmaceutical supply chain.
• Established a multidisciplinary coordinating platform to address health system bottlenecks through implementation research (IR), including a study on the impact of COVID-19 on the delivery of national disease control programmes to inform the development of risk mitigation plans and policy measures.
• Adapted global best practices into national guidelines, standard operating procedures and a training manual for supply chain management of NTD medicines in mass drug administration (MDA) campaigns.
• Implemented active surveillance of adverse events with data collection from over 3,000 patients across 14 COVID-19 treatment centres in five regions.

Ghana

• Supported multisectoral and integrated planning for the introduction of the new RTS,S/AS01 (RTS,S) malaria vaccine across 275 districts, including successful mobilization of a €2.1 million grant to implement the roll-out plan.
• Improved implementation planning for MDA of azithromycin, which will target 90 percent of beneficiaries in three pilot districts, as part of the yaws eradication strategy.
• Continued support to the Food and Drugs Authority, which attained ‘Maturity Level 3’ in April 2020, the second country in the WHO African Region to meet the WHO criteria for a stable and well-functioning regulatory system.
• Supported the national roll-out of a new mobile application, MedSafety, which facilitates fast and direct community reporting of adverse drug reactions and enables education and public awareness campaigns.
• Contributed technical support for the establishment of the national HTA committee to institutionalize HTA for cost-effective decision-making within the National Health Insurance Scheme.

United Republic of Tanzania

• Supported a national multi-stakeholder platform to plan the integrated roll-out of paediatric praziquantel formulation, in anticipation of marketing approval, to address the treatment gap for 15 million children at risk of schistosomiasis.
• Continued support for regulatory system strengthening to maintain the Maturity Level 3 of the Tanzania Medicines and Medical Devices Authority, including for accelerated registration through reliance on WHO Prequalification assessments and for good storage and distribution practices (GSDPs) to ensure supply chain integrity.
• Supported the establishment of the HTA committee, including through the development of national HTA guidelines and processes, and prioritization of research to improve the cost-effectiveness and financial sustainability of the National Health Insurance Fund.
• Co-convened a broad stakeholder meeting at the Health Supply Chain Summit to identify strategies to strengthen performance across each segment of the health supply chain.

Malawi

• Continued support to the multisectoral Technical Working Group to improve policy coherence across innovation, access and delivery of health technologies.
• Initiated the process for regulatory system strengthening by supporting the NRA in conducting a self-assessment using the WHO Global Benchmarking Tool.
• Strengthened institutional capacity within the new National Pharmacovigilance Centre, as well as in tertiary and district hospitals to monitor, manage and report adverse drug reactions.
Regional and South–South cooperation

- ADP regional and global knowledge exchange initiatives reached 46 countries, including support for the engagement of 20 national governments and regional institutions with regional or global platforms aimed at promoting collaboration and policy harmonization.
- Convened the ‘ADP South–South Exchange and Learning Platform’ to promote collaboration and knowledge-sharing between ADP focus countries and ensure health system preparedness for the introduction of new health technologies.
- Developed key guidance documents and strengthened capacities of legal and regulatory experts from 23 countries on domesticating the African Union Model Law on Medical Products Regulation.
- Initiated the regional and country chapters of the Coalition of Interested Parties in the WHO African, Western Pacific and South-East Asia regions to coordinate better technical assistance provision for regulatory system strengthening.
- Strengthened capacities of NRAs in Asia and Africa on good manufacturing practices, GSDPs and quality control/assurance; collaborated with the Southern African Development Community Secretariat to promote joint regulatory assessment of new health technologies through the ZaZiBoNa initiative; and technical assistance to NRAs in the Central African Economic and Monetary Community on self-benchmarking of regulatory functions.

India

- Facilitated South–South technology transfer from India to Indonesia for the implementation of the Electronic Vaccine Intelligence Network (eVIN), a digital logistics management system, which increased the efficiency and integrity of the vaccine supply chain. eVIN has been repurposed for inventory management and beneficiary tracking of the COVID-19 vaccines which will further provide an important model and useful lessons for other LMICs.
- Leveraged the expertise of national research institutions to strengthen technical and scientific capacities in vaccine quality and safety within national immunization programmes in 10 LMICs.

Thailand

- Facilitated South–South cooperation by leveraging the institutional expertise and experience on HTA in Thailand to provide technical assistance to LMICs on multidisciplinary research to improve the cost-effectiveness of national health insurance packages.
- Strengthened the capacity of the NRA to conduct risk-based regulatory inspection and quality control testing to ensure supply of quality assured medical products.

Indonesia

- Strengthened the testing capacity of the national quality control laboratories for post-marketing surveillance to improve evaluation of medicine quality.
- Expanded technical capacity within the Ministry of Health and affiliated academic institutions on the use of HTA and best-practice approaches to medicine price regulation, to inform the planning and cost-effective use of health technologies.
- Improved efficiency and integrity of the vaccine cold chain in two pilot districts by introducing a cloud-based electronic logistics management information system (SMILE), and provided support to secure a GAVI grant of US$2.3 million for the scale-up of SMILE to over 600 health facilities across 11 provinces, reaching 9.4 million beneficiaries.

Global

- In partnership with the Government of Japan and the GHTF, ADP convened the second Global Dialogue of Uniting Efforts for Innovation, Access and Delivery, and technical consultations to identify policy and technical solutions for access planning early in research and development, and mobilization of investment and financing for access to and delivery of health technologies.
- Launched a report titled Financing for Access & Delivery Amid a Global Crisis: Innovative Approaches to Maintain Momentum on Neglected Diseases, which identified innovative options to increase funding for neglected diseases across the innovation – access – delivery continuum.
- In collaboration with the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, published a study on the gender dimensions of NTDs, with recommendations for addressing gender inequalities to ensure equitable prevention, diagnosis and treatment of NTDs.
Key priorities

In today’s rapidly changing global health context, ADP is focused on capacity strengthening across a range of national COVID-19, TB, malaria and NTD priorities in response to established and emerging health system challenges:

- **Supporting national responses to COVID-19**: Given the current need to ensure delivery and equitable access to safe and effective COVID-19 tests and vaccines, ADP is supporting countries to ensure timely diagnostic and vaccine deployment through integrated planning, multisectoral coordination, and regulatory preparedness capacity and supply chain strengthening.

- **Strengthening disease control for TB, malaria and NTDs**: ADP is sustaining and advancing its longstanding commitment to supporting national disease control programmes against TB, malaria and NTDs. Maintaining the most critical prevention activities and care services is essential to reducing the indirect impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable populations.

- **Facilitating South-South exchange and collaboration**: Pandemic responses require sharing of experiences and rapid flows of practical solutions between countries for optimal policy- and decision-making. To complement its in-country activities, ADP facilitates South–South learning and exchanges on policy, programmatic and technical issues that represent common challenges across different health systems, while also expanding the partnership’s reach and impact.

- **Promoting digital health**: The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated digital transformation, including through improved models of health service delivery. ADP is supporting countries to strengthen policy frameworks, governance structures and health workforce capacities to ensure local ecosystem readiness, and identify digital health interventions that are appropriate, cost-effective and sustainable.

The ADP approach is multisectoral, collaborative and integrated

As important advances take place in health research and product development, it is vital to ensure that promising new pipeline technologies can be successfully brought to market through continued and strategic investments. Through multisectoral capacity strengthening, ADP supports LMICs to ensure that once new technologies are available, they can be swiftly introduced and made available to people who need them.

Acknowledging that multiple disciplines and partners are critical across the value chain of access and delivery, ADP promotes three principles: country ownership to ensure long-term sustainability and focus on priorities defined by country stakeholders; cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder collaborations to ensure various perspectives from critical sectors across the value chain are represented; and South-South learning and cooperation to ensure mutual knowledge exchange and learning.

With four core partners – UNDP, WHO, TDR and PATH – ADP is well positioned to provide expanded policy and technical support to strengthen capacities and institutions for the introduction and scale-up of new health technologies. The integrated nature of ADP support stretches across the value chain from enabling policy and legal frameworks, implementation research, regulatory approval, and procurement and supply chain management and, ultimately, to service delivery and patient safety monitoring. ADP’s work is also in alignment with the UNDP Strategic Plan: 2018–2021 and the UNDP HIV, Health and Development Strategy Note 2016–2021, both of which acknowledge the strong link between health and development and the role of resilient and sustainable health systems as the foundation for achieving health and development.