



## **MESSAGE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE FOUR MILLIONTH DEATH FROM THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

**7 July 2021**

Today the world marks yet another grim milestone in the COVID-19 pandemic. Four million souls have now been lost to the virus. This tragic toll is more than the population of one out of three countries on earth.

Many of us know this loss directly and feel its pain. We mourn mothers and fathers who gave guidance, sons and daughters who inspired us, grandmothers and grandfathers who shared wisdom, colleagues and friends who lifted our lives.

Vaccines offer a ray of hope — but most of the world is still in the shadows. The virus is outpacing vaccine distribution. This pandemic is clearly far from over; more than half its victims died this year.

Many millions more are at risk if the virus is allowed to spread like wildfire. The more it spreads, the more variants we see — variants that are more transmissible, more deadly and more likely to undermine the effectiveness of current vaccines.

Bridging the vaccine gap requires the greatest global public health effort in history.

In short, the world needs a Global Vaccine Plan:

- to at least double production of vaccines and ensure equitable distribution, using COVAX as the platform;
- to coordinate implementation and financing;
- and to support countries' readiness and capacity to roll out immunization programmes, while tackling the serious problem of vaccine hesitancy.

To realize this plan, I am calling for an Emergency Task Force that brings together all the countries with vaccine production capacities, the World Health Organization, the global vaccine alliance GAVI and international financial institutions able to deal with the relevant pharmaceutical companies and manufacturers, and other key stakeholders.

- Vaccine equality is the greatest immediate moral test of our times. It is also a practical necessity. Until everyone is vaccinated, everyone is under threat.

Global recovery requires global vaccination. The tragic loss of four million people to this pandemic must drive our urgent efforts to bring it to an end for everyone, everywhere.