Honourable Chair,
Director General,
Members of the EB

- Austria aligns itself with the statement on behalf of the EU and its Member States.
- And not to be confused, this is our national statement as member of the EB.

- Austria thanks the Director-General for his report and constant personal engagement in this challenging period of the COVID-19 pandemic. Austria reassures you of its continuous engagement in the multilateral system for securing global health. We appreciate all the valuable work on coordination and information provided by WHO and its tireless staff during the pandemic while we reaffirm the need for a flexible and prompt handling within the governance structure in particular in crisis times.
- And you know also my criticism, that the **EB as governing body** is not playing its role as it should.
• And I am looking forward to have our retreat convened as soon as we can meet face-to-face again.

Dear Dr. Tedros,

• Regarding COVAX facility, I want to direct some questions directly to the management of GAVI/COVAX.
• We are here the EB, the governing body, so I think we need some answers directly from there.
• Because it is not directly you, DG, who is doing this crucial work.
• The basic principles of COVAX are a fantastic idea. No question. Equal access to vaccines are crucial.
• But I see substantial shortcomings of COVAX to deliver on its heroic goals. 
• COVAX is slow, has not closed a crucial number of contracts and therefore a substantial number of vaccines being timely delivered to the Member States.
• So, there are questions to be answered:
  o What did the Management of GAVI/COVAX do, to create a transparent and inclusive work process towards reaching its goals.
• What do I mean? I am personally the Co-Chair of the Steering Board of the procurement group of the 27-EU Member States and the European Commission. Since early June, we
have been meeting, each and every week at least - once if not three times - making strategic decisions putting together a broad portfolio of vaccines.

- The Joint Negotiating Team is meeting practically daily on the procurement process.

So, transparency and inclusiveness is key for success!

I want to state clearly:

We did do our homework within the EU to secure the needs for 450 Mio EU citizens to have access to these urgently needed vaccines. We were in the EU sceptical, that GAVI/COVAX had the means and capacities to fulfil its task to negotiate the necessary contracts and to secure the needs of our citizens.

More: The proposal, that GAVI negotiates side-by-side with EU with the producers, was rejected by the management of GAVI/COVAX.

So, I would like to express the clear statement: the EU and its Member States are exercising its global solidarity and we are the single largest donor, when it comes to covid-19 vaccines.

- Another crucial question:
  - Why and on which grounds did the Management of GAVI/COVAX decide earlier last year, not to include the mRNAs – vaccines in the portfolio of COVAX?
This was a major mistake, taking into account, that the mRNAs are the early ones on the market and the golden standards.

What are the detailed delivery plans of GAVI/COVAX-managements, so when, what numbers of vaccines can MS expect to be delivered?

I do not see any clarity on these matters.

• Dr. Tedros, I personally know about your efforts to secure access to vaccines to all Member States around the world.

• And you are fighting an heroic fight, I am not directly criticizing you personally.

• But I have to state clearly that GAVI/COVAX has to do a better job.

• The glass of delivery is not even half full.

• Thank you chair.