

REMARKS BY UNICEF UGANDA REPRESENTATIVE
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ON THE OCCASION OF THE FIRST BATCH COVID-19 VACCINES ARRIVAL - UNDER
THE COVAX FACILITY

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Honourable Minister of Health, Dr. Jane Ruth Aceng Oceru
WHO Representative to Uganda, Dr. Yonas Tegegn Woldemariam
EU Ambassador to Uganda, H.E. Attilio Pacifici and other donors and partners represented
here today
Members for the media
Distinguish guests

Ladies and gentlemen,

The arrival of these vaccines in Uganda today marks a **milestone for the COVAX Facility** in its unprecedented effort to deliver at least 2 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines globally by the end of 2021.

I am delighted to note that Uganda is among the top ten African nations receiving the first doses from COVAX, thanks to the **excellent level of preparedness put in place by the Government of Uganda**. We would not have been able to achieve this joint effort without **our donor and partners**, of which some are present today.

UNICEF is pleased to be a key partner in the COVAX Facility. Over recent months, we have been **preparing for this moment** by working closely with all partners to make sure that the necessary logistical and planning arrangements are in place. Together we will enable **equitable access** and ensure that the vaccines are delivered **across the country** to the people who need them most.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Unless we **protect health care providers**, health systems will remain overwhelmed, and the most vulnerable children will continue to lose access to life-saving services, risking years of progress and resulting in the poorest children falling further behind. **The faster we can help combat the pandemic, the faster Uganda can recover**, leading to schools re-opening and health clinics functioning, while ensuring that serious disruptions to the lives of children end.

UNICEF has over the years supported the Government of Uganda in providing much-needed services, including vaccinations. Today, we **pledge our continued commitment** to support the government through the Ministry of Health: to fully support the roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccines; to ensure that the vaccines reach the targeted beneficiaries; and to help contain the spread of the virus.

We know that vaccination is key to protecting our children and ourselves, and building safer communities and societies, free from harmful vaccine-preventable diseases. As we prepare to deploy vaccines against COVID-19, it is critical that children continue to have **access to existing vaccines** in order to prevent outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases alongside the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let us celebrate - today is a historic day in the fight against COVID-19 in Uganda. However, we should consider that safe and effective vaccines against COVID-19 will not, by themselves, end the pandemic. We need to strengthen actions to **slow the spread** of COVID-19, including effective **diagnosis and treatment tools**, as well as existing **prevention and mitigation measures** such as hand-washing, physical distancing, and the use of masks.

Together we can and will make a difference.
I thank you.