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Joint Press Release

Uganda receives 864,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines

Health care providers, security personnel, teachers, journalists, persons aged 50 years and above and those with underlying health conditions to benefit from phase one of vaccination

KAMPALA- Friday, 5 March 2021– The Ministry of Health has today received 864,000 doses of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine, shipped via the COVAX facility—the world’s facility for universal access to COVID-19 vaccines.

The arrival marks a historic step towards the goal to ensure equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines globally, in an unprecedented effort to provide at least 2 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccine by the end of 2021. Uganda targets to vaccinate 49.6 per cent of the population, which is about 21,936,011, in a phased manner. Each phase is planned to cover 20 per cent of the population – approximately 4.38 million people.

The vaccine doses were received at Entebbe International Airport by Uganda’s Health Minister, Dr. Jane Ruth Aceng Ocerro accompanied by members of the COVAX Facility and ambassadors of the European Union and countries whose funding enabled manufacturing, transport, and distribution.

COVAX, the vaccines pillar of the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, is co-led by the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), Gavi - the Vaccine Alliance and the World Health Organization (WHO) – working in partnership with UNICEF as key implementing partner. UNICEF is handling the procurement and delivery of the vaccines and related supplies on behalf of the COVAX Facility.

The AstraZeneca vaccines manufactured by the Serum Institute of India (SII) were transported by UNICEF from India (Mumbai) to Uganda.

The COVAX facility has allocated 3,552,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine to Uganda for the period of January – June 2021. The remaining 2,688,000 doses are expected by June 2021.

The first phase of the FREE vaccination will target health workers in public and private health facilities who by the nature of their work are at higher risk of



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contracting the disease compared to other categories of people. Other target groups in order of priority are security personnel; teachers; humanitarian front-line workers, people above 50 years with underlying conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, heart, kidney, or liver disease; people aged 18-50 with the same underlying conditions; and other emerging high risk and priority essential groups as more vaccine doses arrive in the country.

“The Ministry of Health is finalizing preparations to start vaccination against COVID-19 and with the arrival of the initial batch of 864,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccines today, vaccination is scheduled to begin on 10 March 2021,” Dr. Aceng said.

“The arrival of the vaccines in Uganda is a significant moment and a concrete example of global solidarity in action,” said EU Ambassador to Uganda, H.E. Attilio Pacifici. “Ever since the outbreak of this unprecedented crisis, which is affecting all of us, the European Union and its Member States have supported Uganda and our other African partners in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.”

“Health care providers have been pivotal in managing the COVID-19 pandemic in Uganda. With their crucial role, dealing with patients, comes the high risk of being infected with the disease. We, therefore, thought it wise to have them immunized first along with teachers to protect them,” said the WHO Representative to Uganda, Dr. Yonas Tegegn Woldemariam.

“We specially want to thank the donor partners including the European Union, the UK Government, The United States of America and others for the support they made to COVAX through GAVI to make this possible,” he added.

UNICEF Representative in Uganda, Dr. Munir Safiaddin said, “Today marks an important milestone for Uganda. UNICEF is pleased to be a key partner in the COVAX Facility by ensuring that the vaccines are delivered to the people that need them most.”

“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 combat the pandemic, the faster Uganda can recover, leading to schools re-opening, health centers



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

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functioning and ensuring that serious disruptions to children’s lives end,” Safieldin underlined.

The main objective of the National Deployment Vaccination Plan (NDVP) is to vaccinate up to 49.6 per cent of the population in a phased manner. Each phase is intended to cover 20 per cent of the population. The eligible population comprises of individuals 18 years and above.

Notes to Editors

About COVAX

- COVAX, the vaccines pillar of the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, is co-led by the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance (Gavi) and the World Health Organization (WHO) – working in partnership with UNICEF as key implementing partner, developed and developing country vaccine manufacturers, the World Bank, and others. It is the only global initiative that is working with governments and manufacturers to ensure COVID-19 vaccines are available worldwide to both higher-income and lower-income countries.
- CEPI is focused on the [COVAX vaccine research and development portfolio](#): investing in R&D across a variety of promising candidates, with the goal to support development of three safe and effective vaccines which can be made available to countries participating in the COVAX Facility. As part of this work, CEPI has secured first right of refusal to potentially over one billion doses for the COVAX Facility to a number of candidates, and made strategic investments in vaccine manufacturing, which includes reserving capacity to manufacture doses of COVAX vaccines at a network of facilities, and securing glass vials to hold 2 billion doses of vaccine. CEPI is also investing in the ‘next generation’ of vaccine candidates, which will give the world additional options to control COVID-19 in the future.
- Gavi is focused on procurement and delivery for COVAX: coordinating the design, implementation and administration of the [COVAX Facility](#) and the Gavi [COVAX AMC](#) and working with its Alliance partners UNICEF and WHO, along with governments, on country readiness and delivery. The COVAX Facility is the global pooled procurement mechanism for COVID-19 vaccines through which COVAX will ensure fair and equitable access to vaccines for all 190 participating economies, using an allocation framework formulated by WHO. The COVAX Facility will do this by pooling buying power from participating economies and providing volume guarantees across a range of promising vaccine candidates. The Gavi COVAX AMC is the financing mechanism that will support the participation of 92 low- and middle-income countries in the Facility, enabling access to donor-funded doses of safe and effective vaccines. Gavi is coordinating and fundraising for the COVAX AMC and its no-fault compensation mechanism, and funding UNICEF procurement of vaccines as well as partners’ and governments work on readiness and delivery, including support cold chain equipment, technical assistance, syringes, vehicles, and other aspects of the vastly complex logistical operation for delivery. UNICEF and the Pan-American Health Organisation (PAHO) will be acting as procurement coordinators for the COVAX Facility, helping deliver vaccines to COVAX AMC participants and others.
- WHO has multiple roles within [COVAX](#): It provides normative guidance on vaccine policy, regulation, safety, R&D, allocation, and country readiness and delivery. Its Strategic Advisory Group of Experts ([SAGE](#)) on Immunization develops evidence-based immunization policy recommendations. Its Emergency Use Listing (EUL) / prequalification programmes ensure harmonized review and authorization across member states. It provides global coordination and member state support on vaccine safety monitoring. It developed the target product profiles for



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COVID-19 vaccines and provides R&D technical coordination. WHO leads, together with UNICEF, the [Country Readiness and Delivery workstream](#), which provides support to countries as they prepare to receive and administer vaccines. Along with Gavi and numerous other partners working at the global, regional, and country-level, the CRD workstream provides tools, guidance, monitoring, and on the ground technical assistance for the planning and roll-out of the [vaccines](#). Along with COVAX partners, WHO has [developed](#) a [no-fault compensation scheme](#) as part of the time-limited indemnification and liability commitments.

- UNICEF is leveraging its experience as the largest single vaccine buyer in the world and working with manufacturers and partners on the procurement of COVID-19 vaccine doses, as well as freight, logistics and storage. UNICEF already procures more than 2 billion doses of vaccines annually for routine immunization and outbreak response on behalf of nearly 100 countries. In collaboration with the [PAHO Revolving Fund](#), UNICEF is [leading efforts](#) to procure and supply doses of COVID-19 vaccines for COVAX. In addition, UNICEF, Gavi and WHO are working with governments around the clock to ensure that countries are ready to receive the vaccines, with appropriate cold chain equipment in place and health workers trained to dispense them. UNICEF is also playing a lead role in efforts to foster trust in vaccines, delivering vaccine confidence communications and tracking and addressing misinformation around the world.

About CEPI

- CEPI is an innovative partnership between public, private, philanthropic, and civil organisations, launched at Davos in 2017, to develop vaccines to stop future epidemics. CEPI has moved with great urgency and in coordination with WHO in response to the emergence of COVID-19. CEPI has initiated ten partnerships to develop vaccines against the novel coronavirus. The programmes are leveraging rapid response platforms already supported by CEPI as well as new partnerships. Before the emergence of COVID-19, CEPI's priority diseases included Ebola virus, Lassa virus, Middle East Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus, Nipah virus, Rift Valley Fever and Chikungunya virus. CEPI also invested in platform technologies that can be used for rapid vaccine and immunoprophylactic development against unknown pathogens (Disease X).

About Gavi

- Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance is a public-private partnership that helps vaccinate half the world's children against some of the world's deadliest diseases. Since its inception in 2000, Gavi has helped to immunise a whole generation – over 822 million children – and prevented more than 14 million deaths, helping to halve child mortality in 73 developing countries. Gavi also plays a key role in improving global health security by supporting health systems as well as funding global stockpiles for Ebola, cholera, meningitis and yellow fever vaccines. After two decades of progress, Gavi is now focused on protecting the next generation and reaching the unvaccinated children still being left behind, employing innovative finance and the latest technology – from drones to biometrics – to save millions more lives, prevent outbreaks before they can spread and help countries on the road to self-sufficiency. Learn more at www.gavi.org and connect with us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

The Vaccine Alliance brings together developing country and donor governments, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the World Bank, the vaccine industry, technical agencies, civil society, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and other private sector partners. View the full list of donor governments and other leading organizations that fund Gavi's work [here](#).

About WHO

- The World Health Organization provides global leadership in public health within the United Nations system. Founded in 1948, WHO works with 194 Member States, across six regions and from more than 150 offices, to promote health, keep the world safe and serve the vulnerable. Our goal for 2019-2023 is to ensure that a billion more people have universal health coverage, to



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protect a billion more people from health emergencies, and provide a further billion people with better health and wellbeing.

For updates on COVID-19 and public health advice to protect yourself from coronavirus, visit www.who.int and follow WHO on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [TikTok](#), [Pinterest](#), [Snapchat](#), [YouTube](#)

About UNICEF

- UNICEF works in some of the world’s toughest places, to reach the world’s most disadvantaged children. Across 190 countries and territories, we work for every child, everywhere, to build a better world for everyone. For more information about UNICEF and its work for children, visit www.unicef.org. For more information about COVID-19, visit www.unicef.org/coronavirus . Find out more about UNICEF’s work on the COVID-19 vaccines [here](#), or about UNICEF’s work on immunization [here](#).
- Follow UNICEF on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

About the ACT-Accelerator

- The Access to COVID-19 Tools ACT-Accelerator, is a new, ground-breaking global collaboration to accelerate the development, production, and equitable access to COVID-19 tests, treatments, and vaccines. It was set up in response to a call from G20 leaders in March and launched by the WHO, European Commission, France and The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in April 2020.
- The ACT-Accelerator is not a decision-making body or a new organisation but works to speed up collaborative efforts among existing organisations to end the pandemic. It is a framework for collaboration that has been designed to bring key players around the table with the goal of ending the pandemic as quickly as possible through the accelerated development, equitable allocation, and scaled up delivery of tests, treatments and vaccines, thereby protecting health systems and restoring societies and economies in the near term. It draws on the experience of leading global health organisations which are tackling the world’s toughest health challenges, and who, by working together, are able to unlock new and more ambitious results against COVID-19. Its members share a commitment to ensure all people have access to all the tools needed to defeat COVID-19 and to work with unprecedented levels of partnership to achieve it.
- The ACT-Accelerator has four areas of work: diagnostics, therapeutics, vaccines and the health system connector. Cross cutting all of these is the workstream on Access & Allocation.

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