

December 3, 2021

Civil Society support calls for increased quality in dose donations to Africa

The Africa Working Group on Pandemic Preparedness and Response supports the [Joint Statement on Dose Donations of COVID-19 Vaccines to African Countries](#) by the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), the African Vaccine Acquisition Trust (AVAT) and COVAX published on November 29, 2021. The statement draws the attention of the international community to the quality of donations of COVID-19 vaccines to Africa, and other COVAX participating economies, particularly those supported by the Gavi COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC).

COVID-19 has overstretched health systems in most African countries, which were already struggling to enhance equity in health service delivery. As supply and delivery of COVID-19 vaccines increase on the continent through various mechanisms — AVAT, COVAX and bilateral arrangements, we strongly urge the international community to comply with the COVAX Principles of sharing COVID-19 doses. The availability of vaccine vials alone does not guarantee vaccine access. Countries must be able to move vaccines from the manufacturer and state warehouses into the right arm — this includes the availability of essential supplies, such as syringes, to guarantee safe administration. This calls for the assurance of safety and efficacy of vaccines throughout the supply chain. Achieving this goal requires prior planning and coordination at national, sub-national and facility levels.

It is in this regard that we reiterate support to calls by Africa CDC, AVAT and COVAX, and urge the international community and manufacturers to ensure that donations are aligned with countries' requisite plans, absorption capacity and coordination measures that allow them to fully utilize the number of doses made available. This also demands that urgent efforts be taken to address the acute shortage of ancillaries for COVID-19 vaccines. If adhered to, the principles would ensure that wastage of direly needed life-saving vaccines is maintained below the recommended 10%. They would also ensure that vaccine availability is prioritized, vaccines are rapidly deployed, unearmarked, of substantive quantity, safe and effective. By ensuring donated doses have a minimum shelf life of 10 weeks when they arrive in-country, donors and manufacturers can help ease the logistical pressure on already overstretched health systems and ensure that vaccines are delivered to those that need them most.

We call upon the global community to ramp up manufacturing of needed essential commodities and reduce shortages across the globe, including within Africa. Any potential cause of vaccine wastage especially in Africa must be quickly and robustly addressed as the prospects of achieving the WHO 40% COVID-19 vaccination target by December 2021 seem bleak in the current prevailing conditions.

Echoing the words of Dr. Tedros as he closed the World Health Assembly Special Session, “ending this pandemic is not a matter of chance; it’s a matter of choice”. Donors and manufacturers can choose to adhere to the COVAX principles to increase the quality of dose donations to Africa. Countries that have vaccinated 70% of their populations can choose to swap their vaccine delivery schedules with COVAX and AVAT, just as Switzerland has done. Member states can choose to remove barriers to scaling-up vaccine production through sharing

technology and know-how, by supporting waiver of intellectual property rights. Global leaders can choose to increase surveillance, testing, sequencing, timely reporting and stop the spread of misinformation. Dose donations are not a sustainable solution, Africa must be supported to produce vaccines locally not just for this pandemic but also to prepare for future health threats.

This statement is endorsed by the following organizations:

Access Challenge

Global Citizen

Kanco

Pandemic Action Network

PATH

ONE Campaign

WACI Health