



COVAX

COVAX FACILITY ADVANCE MARKET COMMITMENT (“AMC”) ENGAGEMENT GROUP MEETING

17 May 2021

Virtual meeting

1. Welcome and Introduction

- 1.1 Finding a quorum of members present, the meeting commenced at 13.05 Geneva time. Co-Chair Karina Gould welcomed the participants and, in her opening remarks, underscored the need for a collective goal of getting healthcare workers and the most vulnerable populations vaccinated, as the world faces a third wave of COVID-19. She underlined the need to build greater vaccine confidence, ensuring strong demand generation and strengthened health systems to be able to deploy and absorb the influx of doses expected in the last quarter of the year.
- 1.2 Co-Chair Lia Tadesse welcomed the participants and looked forward to reviewing progress to date, discussing issues and exploring better ways to collaborate to face the challenges ahead and help COVAX achieve its goals.
- 1.3 The representative of Japan, Mr Keichi Hara, Deputy Director General and Deputy Assistant Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, officially announced that Japan will co-host the COVAX AMC summit on 2 June 2021. He noted that Japan, as a significant donor to the health sector, highly values the work of the COVAX Facility to support access to safe, efficacious and quality vaccines by developing countries. He looked forward to working with donor countries and other partners to fill the funding gap required for the provision of 1.8 billion COVID-19 doses in 2021.

2. COVAX Facility updates

News/developments since last meeting

- 2.1 Seth Berkley, CEO, presented the latest key metrics. COVID-19 vaccine deliveries have reached 120 participants with approximately 60 million doses distributed. Despite the progress, supply challenges continue to affect both AMC and Self-Financing Participants (SFPs), with forecasts of deliveries in 2021 dropping from 2.15 to 1.7 billion doses. Dr Berkley highlighted the acute pandemic spread in Latin America and India and referred to the new COVID-19 variants. He underlined that vaccines continue to provide protection against severe illness and death, including against variants, and that non-pharmaceutical measures remain fundamental.
- 2.2 Dr Berkley stated that vaccination rates around the world are highly unequal. In this context, the COVAX mission becomes ever more important. In the current supply-constrained environment, COVAX is doing everything it can to resume vaccine shipments, including: entering into new Advance Purchase Agreements (APAs) to diversify and expand the supplier pool; working with manufacturers to increase capacity; and engaging with countries with excess doses to facilitate access for COVAX participants as quickly as possible.

Delivery Update

- 2.3 Aurélia Nguyen, Managing Director, Office of the COVAX Facility, gave a progress update since the March 2021 AMC Group meeting and welcomed Gabon as the most recent member to join the SFPs. She referred to the suspension of supply from the Serum Institute of India (SII) and to progress made on securing new sources of supply, including from Moderna and Novavax. With reference to the dose-sharing programme, she acknowledged commitments from France, New Zealand, Spain and Sweden.
- 2.4 Ms Nguyen noted the efforts to raise a further US\$ 2 billion for COVAX AMC financing, highlighting the AMC Summit in June. She outlined progress on several other critical initiatives including the COVAX Buffer, the AMC No Fault Compensation Scheme, the COVAX Collaboration Platform and the COVAX Exchange. Finally, she noted the increased frequency of communication with AMC participants and welcomed feedback to ensure that AMC participant needs are met.

Supply and Deals

- 2.5 Ann Ottosen, Senior Manager, Vaccine Centre, UNICEF Supply Division, provided an overview of allocation and delivery, highlighting the total allocations so far, challenges, the current shipment status and planned delivery. She also provided a detailed overview of allocated vs delivered

volumes of COVID-19 vaccines from SII, AstraZeneca and Pfizer, from February to May 2021.

- 2.6 Ms Ottosen highlighted ongoing efforts to increase supplies, including more dose-sharing advocacy and ongoing work to assist countries with vaccine absorption issues. She noted ongoing efforts to obtain stability data that would potentially extend vaccine shelf lives from 6 to 9 months, facilitating country absorption.
- 2.7 Aurélia Nguyen provided an update on the COVID-19 vaccine landscape, noting that the number of candidates entering clinical development keeps growing, with 100 currently underway. She highlighted two new APAs with Moderna and Novavax, including clauses that provide COVAX with the option to access future variant-adapted vaccines.
- 2.8 She provided an overview of COVAX Facility supply per vaccine candidate. Despite the implications of the SII supply suspension on the near-term supply of COVAX, a significant ramping up of doses from Q3 through to the end of the year is expected. It is important that countries are prepared in terms of ensuring there is cold chain capacity, identifying target groups, and considering public messaging around the vaccines.

Dose Sharing

- 2.9 Marie-Ange Saraka-Yao, Managing Director, Resource Mobilisation, Private Sector Partnerships and Innovative Finance reminded the participants about the key principles of dose-sharing, gave an update on its ongoing operationalisation and extended her thanks to the countries that have already donated vaccines. She encouraged countries to come forward with excess doses to help address short-term supply constraints and noted important upcoming events including the G20 Global Health Summit, and the AMC Summit on 2 June 2021.

Cost Sharing

- 2.10 Santiago Cornejo, Director, Country Engagement, Office of the COVAX Facility, provided an overview of the programmatic aspect of cost-sharing. He reported that COVAX will soon confirm supply expectations with countries that indicated demand to purchase additional doses through cost-sharing. He provided an overview of supply expectations, financing, vaccine preference and timelines.

Discussion

- Regarding the question about the possibility of mixing two different vaccines and the efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccine if the doses are taken 12-16 weeks apart, it was clarified that WHO had provided a guidance note on this topic, and updated recommendations would follow soon. Data on mixing and matching different combinations of all products is not available yet,

however a recommendation from the Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on immunisation (SAGE) is expected as data is generated.

- With reference to the AZ vaccine, it was clarified by WHO that delaying the second dose does not impact the efficacy of the vaccine and may improve its response. Studies indicate that the anti-bodies are sustained for 12 weeks after the first dose, and probably provide significant protection, but not as high as after the second dose. Information on the degree of protection from the first dose only is not available yet. More data on the performance of extended interval schedules will become available in the near future.
- On redistribution of vaccines, the Secretariat clarified that countries are encouraged to do all they can to absorb all the doses they receive; however, acknowledging the challenges faced by some countries and given the global vaccine supply constraint, redistribution may have to be considered. The Secretariat is monitoring closely the situation in all countries and countries are encouraged to come forward if they anticipate absorption issues.
- The Secretariat clarified that countries will receive further information on cost-sharing in late May or early June 2021. Countries that did not submit requests were encouraged to do so as soon as possible. The aim is not to cap doses per country, although the Facility will strive to maintain a fair distribution across all countries. Delivery of these doses is expected during the last quarter of 2021.
- It was noted that the dose-sharing mechanism is already operational and vaccine batches are being delivered to countries. The positive feedback expressed by one AMC participant on dose-sharing through the Facility was noted. With reference to the mechanism's principles, the Facility will reflect on the experience of the past months and consult with the AMC Investors Group, as it did when establishing the original principles.

3. Spotlight on Key Topics

2022 Strategy

- 3.1 Aurélia Nguyen introduced the ongoing work to develop the COVAX Facility Strategy from 2022 and beyond. Key considerations include: the Global Vaccination Strategy (WHO), role of the COVAX Pillar (COVAX Partnership) and Procurement & Delivery strategy (Gavi Alliance). The process will be strengthened by a series of inclusive workshops and consultations with the Gavi Board, partners and countries, as part of the Country Participation Model. The participants were encouraged to provide feedback on what the COVAX portfolio should prioritise and the Facility's primary focus for 2022.

AMC Finances and Investment Opportunity

3.2 Marie-Ange Saraka-Yao presented the AMC finances and recent Investment Opportunity, providing an overview of immediate needs and the pledges made to the COVAX AMC to date. Ms Saraka-Yao noted the importance of planning ahead to secure funds, to enable COVAX to be competitive, negotiate the best deals and respond quickly. She highlighted the ongoing efforts to raise funds to close 2021 and cover 2022 needs, noting that leveraging the support of the World Bank and other multilateral development banks to help countries acquire additional doses is critical. She thanked the donors for their contributions and referred to ongoing work to establish a communication protocol to provide full recognition for donors to AMC funding.

Delivery Support

3.3 Mr Thabani Maphosa, Managing Director, Country Programmes, provided an overview of funding received for COVAX delivery, amounting to US\$ 768 million. He recalled that these funds are part of a broader funding ecosystem whereby funds are provided by donors as well as by the World Bank, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and others. He noted that the Gavi Board will be requested in June to approve two envelopes with the total of US\$ 800 million for COVID-19 delivery and system strengthening, as well as for cross-country delivery elements. Discussions with countries are ongoing to prepare for delivery, should these resources be approved.

Building Vaccine Confidence

3.4 Lisa Menning, Team Lead, Department of Immunization, Vaccines and Biologicals at WHO, provided a brief overview of work carried out at the country level to attain and sustain acceptance and confidence in vaccine benefits and safety. Ms Menning noted that a data-driven, people-centred, and multi-component response, encompassing triangulation of data, engagement with trusted communities and experts, and communication, helps to address vaccine hesitancy.

Discussion

- The Secretariat noted that, while COVAX is working to remedy supply delays, it is crucial to use this time to ensure that delivery systems in countries are ready for when supplies increase. Preparation of delivery systems to enable rapid channelling of the large quantities of doses expected in the second part of this year will be critical, not only for COVID-19 but for all immunisation programmes.
- In response to an inquiry about expanding manufacturing capacities in developing countries, it was noted that a workstream is being set up to

address production bottlenecks. In the short-term, the focus is on ensuring access to raw materials and effective use of existing capacities; for the medium and long term, the focus is technology transfer, including to developing countries, to ensure geographical and technological diversity and more resilient supply chains and production capacities. Work covers regulatory aspects, cold chain strengthening, training, healthcare worker deployment, as well as identification of target populations. AMC economies were encouraged to reach out to the Secretariat for support if needed and make use of the time to prepare for the second part of the year.

4. Summary, Key Take-aways and Closing Remarks

- 4.1 Aurélia Nguyen presented a summary of the meeting and key take-aways.
- 4.2 In his closing remarks, Dr Berkley reminded the participants that the pandemic has underlined the need for equitable access to vaccines, and that we are only safe if we are all safe. Furthermore, he underlined the importance of dose-sharing and the need to prepare for the large number of COVID-19 vaccines that will be available towards the end of 2021, as well as the need to address vaccine hesitancy.
- 4.3 After determining that there was no further business, the meeting was brought to a close.