



COVAX

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

12 July 2021

Virtual meeting

1. Welcome and Introduction

- 1.1 Finding a quorum of members present, the meeting commenced at 13.00 Geneva time. Co-Chair Lia Tadesse welcomed the participants. In her opening remarks, she referred to the common challenges in securing vaccines to protect health workers and the most vulnerable populations which make collaboration with the COVAX Facility (“the Facility”) even more important. She outlined the meeting agenda and encouraged the participants to share their concerns and ideas in order to have a strong discussion.
- 1.2 Co-Chair Retno Marsudi expressed her deep concern about the pandemic, with many countries continuing to face acute challenges, surging infections and deaths. She underlined the need to strengthen efforts to scale up vaccine production by diversifying manufacturing, expanding the vaccine portfolio and improving absorption capacities.
- 1.3 Co-Chair Karina Gould noted that the world is entering a critical phase of the pandemic, making the work of COVAX more important than ever, as it strives to provide access to COVID-19 vaccines for all countries, particularly the AMC92 economies.
- 1.4 Co-Chair Tadesse thanked Japan for hosting the COVAX AMC Summit on 2 June 2021 and invited the representative of Japan, Ambassador Keiichi Ono, to take the floor. Ambassador Ono conveyed his gratitude to Gavi as well as the participants for their strong commitment to the success of the

AMC Summit. He noted that the Summit had mobilised US\$ 2.4 billion and contributed to exceeding the overall target of US\$ 9.3 billion, which demonstrated the power of international solidarity. He stated that Japan is committed to providing vaccines to the Facility, accelerating the provision of supplies to Southeast Asia, Southwest Asia, the Pacific Islands and other regions.

2. COVAX Facility updates

- 2.1 Seth Berkley, CEO, highlighted the latest Facility updates. Since the AMC Group met on 17 May 2021, the Facility completed deliveries to 135 additional participants, but the need to deliver more remains a top priority. COVAX has been working to diversify its portfolio further and has been working with donor countries to facilitate dose donations. He highlighted two new Advance Purchase Agreements (APAs) with Sinopharm and Sinovac and noted that the Facility is expecting substantive vaccine supplies in the third and fourth quarters of 2021, which requires urgent country preparedness. He noted that the distribution of vaccines continues to be unequal, while the pandemic is entering a new deadly phase with the Delta variant spreading all over the world.
- 2.2 Dr Berkley presented key metrics where significant progress has been made, including exceeding the resource mobilisation targets for 2021 and reaching US\$ 9.7 billion, thanks to the generosity of donors, in addition to portfolio diversification through signing new deals. He welcomed an agreement with the US Government to add 500 million doses of Pfizer vaccine to the COVAX portfolio, including 200 million doses to be delivered in 2021.
- 2.3 He welcomed Tanzania as the latest member to join the AMC Group, and Equatorial Guinea, which joined recently as a Self-Financing Participant (SFP). He referred to the launch of the dose-sharing programme and noted that the COVAX Humanitarian Buffer has received its first applications.
- 2.4 In relation to the allocation rounds, he noted that there have been five rounds to date, with approximately 283 million doses allocated. Future allocation rounds are planned to begin in quarter three, and the Facility will ensure that participants with lower coverage through COVAX doses will catch up with others to ensure equitable access.
- 2.5 Dr Berkley highlighted the benefits of the cost-sharing mechanism for the AMC92 participants to increase their coverage beyond the fully-subsidised AMC doses, while benefiting from the Facility prices and streamlined processes. To date, 58 AMC participants have submitted requests. AMC participants are encouraged to work with Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) to access financing for COVAX doses.

Discussion

- The Facility responded to queries on COVID-19 vaccines supply and delivery gaps for 2021, noting that delivery challenges are related mainly to the third quarter. The Facility has been calling on countries that are interested in donating their excess doses to come forward as soon as possible before the large supply volumes become available in the fourth quarter of 2021.
- In terms of the efficacy of the vaccines available to the COVAX portfolio against the Delta variant, the Facility underlined that the current data indicates responsiveness of existing vaccines to the Delta variant, with protection against severe illness, hospitalisation, and death. It will be critical to monitor closely vaccine efficacy and waning immunity over time, particularly if new variants emerge.
- In relation to the Delta variant, WHO noted that from a policy perspective, it is critical to close the equity gap by increasing vaccine supply and getting vaccines into people's arms. WHO is supporting monitoring and surveillance of the different variants of concern, and has made available guidance and tools for countries to carry out impact and effectiveness studies, in order to obtain more data on the variants. Countries must remain vigilant and the response to the pandemic should not be limited to vaccines, as social measures, therapeutics and diagnostics remain critical.

3. Supply Risk Mitigation

- 3.1 Aurélia Nguyen, Managing Director, Office of the COVAX Facility, introduced the COVAX Facility global supply forecast, highlighting a significant anticipated ramp-up that will reach the 1.9 billion doses target towards the end of 2021. She noted that responding to the pandemic has entailed the development, approval, and manufacturing of new vaccines at an unprecedented speed and scale which has brought various supply and shipment challenges not only to COVAX, but to most buyers around the world.
- 3.2 She highlighted several steps that COVAX has taken to expand, diversify and improve the reliability of its portfolio such as signing new deals and benefiting from dose donations. She presented the supply forecast and current assumptions for the rest of 2021, noting that all supply outlooks come with risks.
- 3.3 Marie-Ange Saraka Yao, Managing Director, Resource Mobilisation, Private Sector Partnerships and Innovative Finance presented an update on dose donations from donor countries which have facilitated the acceleration of the dose-sharing mechanism to benefit all AMC participants and advance the

equity goal. The Facility is able to provide a wide range of products that were provided by 36 countries to date. Donated doses will contribute approximately 300 million additional doses before the end of 2021. Ms Saraka-Yao underlined the importance of donating doses in the current quarter and reiterated her gratitude to countries for their generous donations and ongoing commitment.

- 3.4 Aurélie Nguyen presented the COVAX Manufacturing Taskforce vision, objectives as well as its four workstreams. The taskforce aims to secure more doses for COVAX and to enable the Facility to achieve its mission with a focus on AMC92 countries, while mitigating the unintended impact on other vaccines and health products.
- 3.5 Finally, she outlined three mechanisms that are currently under development within the Facility, namely: reselling of doses, the marketplace and exchange. The Facility is assessing the risks, benefits and feasibility of these mechanisms and will report the outcomes of its assessment in due time.

Discussion

- In response to questions related to the COVAX Manufacturing taskforce, the Facility confirmed that countries have given strong expressions of interest to host regional hubs, and that progress on related due diligence is underway. Further announcements and timelines would follow shortly. Regular, detailed briefings on the taskforce will be provided through the Facilitation Council for the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, and through the Facility, in addition to the possibility of making such reporting available on the Gavi website.

4. Preparing for Q4

- 4.1 Ann Lindstrand, Unit Head, EPI Essential Programme on Immunisation, WHO, presented the necessary measures to prepare for the ramp-up of COVID-19 vaccines in quarter four of 2021. She underlined that country readiness and planning are critical, given that up to 1.36 billion doses are anticipated to be delivered in quarter four. This calls for a rapid increase in AMC92 absorption to meet the 300 million doses per month to be provided by COVAX from October 2021.
- 4.2 She presented the detailed end-to-end process of vaccine delivery, including roadblocks, necessary actions and proposed solutions. She called on participants to undertake thorough planning and referred to new WHO guidance on National Deployment and Vaccination Plans (NDVPs), where critical considerations such as target populations and target coverage can be included.

- 4.3 In relation to delivery funding support, she highlighted a dynamic landscape with many funders, including the World Bank and MDBs. Donors have raised US\$ 775 million to support delivery across AMC92 countries, and the Gavi Alliance Board approved a decision to accelerate flexible disbursement of US\$ 250-350 million with an expedited request process. The primary aim is to ensure that no doses go to waste and that funding gaps are appropriately filled. The COVID-19 vaccine delivery support early access window is now open, and applications can be submitted through the Partners' Platform.
- 4.4 Ms Lindstrand referred to the COVAX Allocation Mechanism noting that specific changes will be necessary in response to epidemiological data and absorptive capacity. These relate to the transition from phase 1 to phase 2 during quarter four of 2021, with an interim phase to compare total coverage figures with those provided by COVAX; this would allow the Facility to respond pragmatically in a severely supply-constrained environment.
- 4.5 Finally, Ms Lindstrand encouraged the participants to contact the Facility to determine how best to help countries prepare for the upcoming surge of COVID-19 vaccines, and to initiate dialogue with Senior Country Managers and relevant focal points for delivery funding support.

Discussion

- The Secretariat responded to queries related to the level of certainty of delivering the fifth allocation round in 2021, noting that the vaccine supplies are secured through APAs, as well as through US donations of Pfizer doses. It was underlined that Pfizer has some specific requirements that will need to be met before delivery. UNICEF and other partners are working closely to secure visibility of shipments as much as possible, but the situation remains fluid. Country preparedness for shipments including regulatory aspects, Indemnity and Liability, logistics readiness and ultra-cold chain capacities were underlined as critical to facilitate vaccine roll-out at country level. AMC participants were encouraged to take these important considerations into account in preparing their NDVPs.
- In relation to the sequencing of COVAX-subsidised doses to cover 20% of AMC92 populations and the timeline for cost-sharing doses, the Secretariat clarified that the specific timing of receiving cost-sharing doses will be identified in the supply offering provided by the Facility. The Facility will work closely with countries to ensure that they meet their 20% coverage through the allocation mechanism. It was reiterated that the AMC92 countries will receive all their COVAX-funded doses, even if cost-sharing doses are received before the 20% coverage target is reached.
- WHO responded to a query on the vaccine passport issue, noting that as long as supply constraints exist and countries are not able to access

COVID-19 vaccines equitably, imposing a vaccine passport on international travel would only fuel inequity and widen the gap between those who have access to vaccines and those who do not. The importance of ensuring that all vaccines which have been granted WHO EUL be recognised by all countries was emphasised, to ensure equity.

- In relation to addressing vaccine hesitancy, the Secretariat clarified that work is ongoing to mobilise populations to get vaccinated and to deal with vaccine acceptance issues. It was underlined that part of the funding support available to AMC countries could be deployed for such purposes and countries were encouraged to make use of this funding.

5. Summary, Takeaway and Closing Remarks

- 5.1 Aurélia Nguyen presented the meeting summary and key takeaways.
- 5.2 The Co-Chairs thanked the COVAX Facility staff for the huge progress made in such a short time and highlighted the importance of ensuring country readiness as soon as possible, to prepare for the imminent ramp-up of vaccine supply. Strengthening solidarity and collaboration are key to ensure equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines for all to end the pandemic. The participants were encouraged to share any suggestions or reflections on how to optimise the AMC Group meetings.
- 5.3 Co-Chair Retno Marsudi thanked the participants for their valuable contributions and informed them that the next AMC Group meeting will take place on 12 October 2021.
- 5.4 After determining that there was no further business, the meeting was brought to a close.