



COVAX

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

28 September 2022

Virtual meeting

1. Welcome, Introduction and Update

- 1.1 Noting that the meeting had been duly convened, the meeting commenced at 13.01 Geneva time on 28 September 2022. Co-Chairs Harjit Sajjan and Lia Tadesse chaired the meeting.
- 1.2 The meeting did not have quorum. In accordance with the COVAX AMC Engagement Group Operating Procedures, the meeting could proceed at the option of the Co-Chairs, however no decisions could be made.
- 1.3 In her opening remarks, Co-Chair Lia Tadesse reviewed the agenda for the meeting, noting that there would be discussions of key COVAX updates, COVID-19 vaccination delivery, and COVAX beyond 2022. She reflected that while COVID-19 cases are declining and coverage rates are increasing, many remain unvaccinated, including vulnerable populations. She encouraged all participants to engage actively and to lend their experiences in the discussions.
- 1.4 Co-Chair Retno Marsudi, in her remarks, compared the pandemic to a marathon and noted that runners do not stop when the finish line comes into view. She indicated there are two areas that must remain a joint priority: i) narrowing the vaccination gap between countries; and ii) changing the mindset from one of health emergency to one of pandemic preparedness and response, identifying lessons and best practices from the experience of COVAX. She suggested that this might require a permanent global mechanism to preserve global solidarity and ensure equitable access to medical solutions, especially for developing countries.

- 1.5 Co-Chair Harjit Sajjan emphasised that the COVID-19 virus is still evolving and encouraged participants to keep equity of access as a central principle moving forward. He indicated the need to reinforce health systems in order to prepare for any future pandemics.
- 1.6 Seth Berkley, CEO, noted that this is critical juncture in the pandemic as much of the world transitions away from an emergency response. While this is something to be celebrated, he emphasised that it is important that the global community not let down its guard, noting that recent modelling indicates that there would be a significant increase in cases toward the end of this year.
- 1.7 He referenced the reduction in Pfizer doses donated by the United States Government to COVAX and indicated that COVAX had already been in touch with those countries expecting supply from Pfizer in the coming months to discuss alternative supply through the COVAX portfolio. Following an extension in the shelf life of Pfizer doses, it was also clarified that COVAX would like to hear from any countries who would like to access Pfizer doses now as there may be doses available in the short term.
- 1.8 In relation to variant containing vaccines (VcVs), he emphasised that COVAX is exploring multiple potential avenues to secure VcVs for AMC countries. He flagged that it would be helpful to hear about how participants were thinking about VcVs.
- 1.9 Dr Berkley concluded by urging participants to continue the course on protecting high risk groups, such as the elderly, including through boosters, to keep pace with the mutating virus and waning immunity to COVID-19.
- 1.10 Derrick Sim, acting Managing Director, Office of the COVAX Facility, provided an update on allocations and deliveries to AMC participants. He highlighted that COVAX doses currently represent the majority of the supply to Africa and make up 75% of the supply in lower-income countries.
- 1.11 He also reported on coverage rates across AMC economies, which for health care workers has reached 76% coverage with primary series completion. For older adults, only 64% have completed primary series and he reiterated that there is a need for renewed focus on reaching this group, both to complete primary series and be boosted.
- 1.12 On primary series completion as a whole, AMC countries combined have crossed the 50% coverage milestone and 82% of AMC countries have also started administering boosters. He emphasised the need for booster programmes, with a focus on high-risk populations.
- 1.13 Kristina Lorenson, Senior Contract Manager, UNICEF Supply Division, provided an update on supply and delivery, noting a slowing trend in vaccine deliveries, although with larger volumes in August and the first half of September mainly driven by large 100 million dose allocation to India. She

flagged: i) the 25 million paediatric doses that had been shipped to 18 countries; and ii) that 971 million of the 1.8 billion doses were donated doses.

- 1.14 Hannah Kettler, Acting Lead, Design & Operationalisation, COVAX, presented on key COVAX policy updates, including on paediatric doses, boosters and VCVs.

2. Update on COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery, including country examples

- 2.1 Richard Mihigo, Director, COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery, Coordination and Integration – COVAX, provided an update on the progress in COVID-19 vaccination coverage that has been seen across AMC countries since the start of 2022. He flagged that the gap between global coverage and that of AMC 92 economies has been decreased from 18 percentage points in January 2022 to 12 percentage points today. However, he noted that the coverage of the 34 Countries for concerted delivery support remains low with only 17% coverage and that there are still nine countries below the 10% overall coverage.
- 2.2 He reported strong progress for high-risk groups, including healthcare workers and the older adults, although he noted coverage rates for older adults were more inconsistent across the AMC countries with 26 countries below 30%. He also indicated that among the countries dealing with humanitarian emergencies, many have made strong increases in overall coverage since the beginning of the year.
- 2.3 Finally, he reviewed the ~US\$ 1.6 billion in delivery funding that has been made available since 2021, including the new COVID-19 Delivery Support (CDS) funding received of US\$ 600 million for which applications are currently ongoing.
- 2.4 Florian Tinuga, National EPI Manager, United Republic of Tanzania, provided a summary of the experience in his country in ramping up COVID-19 vaccination delivery. He highlighted the key factors contributing to the successful response, including: i) government commitment; ii) partner engagement; iii) investments in vaccine demand and community engagement; and iv) effective service delivery through a robust immunisation system. He also outlined several remaining challenges, such as the need: i) for strengthened data; ii) to roll out boosters; iii) for continued inter-ministerial/partner collaboration on unlocking financial bottlenecks; iv) to address a stretched health workforce; v) to support recovery of routine immunisation so that the country would be prepared to address an expanding measles outbreak, ongoing cross border response to wild polio outbreak, and other epidemic risks such as Sudan Ebola virus outbreak and cholera.

- 2.5 Olivier Manzi, Consultant, World Health Organization, Central African Republic, shared perspectives on the response since the start of COVID-19 vaccination in May 2021. The key principles of the campaign included: i) high-level engagement; ii) community dialogue; iii) integration of activities; and iv) partner engagement. The overall objective has been to achieve 70% coverage by the end of 2022, while targeting people with comorbidities, healthcare workers, older adults, and other target groups (e.g. refugees, internally displaced persons). He described several key bottlenecks related to i) coordination, planning and financing; ii) logistics, cold chain and management of waste; iii) service delivery; iv) communication and demand generation; and v) adverse events following immunization (AEFI) monitoring and management. He also outlined the key measures that have been in place to overcome these challenges, such as the integration of COVID-19 vaccination in all routine immunisation campaigns.

Discussion

- Co-Chair Tadesse expressed appreciation to all presenters, including the two representatives from Tanzania and Central African Republic. She noted the encouraging progress and impressive efforts by countries, but indicated there is still concern over the coverage of high-risk groups including older adults. She also highlighted the example given by Dr Tinuga of the use of community groups and home-based activities to reach these populations.

3. Update on COVAX beyond 2022 (Integration and future allocations, Governance, Co-Chair consultations)

- 3.1 Derrick Sim, acting Managing Director, Office of the COVAX Facility, provided an overview of the latest thinking on the progression of COVAX in 2022-23 to a Gavi-supported COVID-19 programme from 2024. In 2023, COVAX will continue to support the AMC92 to meet their targets with increasing focus on the highest burden countries and high priority groups. He also indicated that a longer-term COVID-19 programme that will focus on reaching the higher priority groups with additional boosters is still under discussion with the Gavi Board.
- 3.2 He also outlined the key elements of the revised COVAX operations model as it transitions to a rolling allocation approach to satisfy new demand.
- 3.3 Brenda Killen, Director, Governance, provided an update on matters related to the COVAX governing bodies. She reported that the Gavi Board is considering the integration of the COVAX Facility as part of an update to the current Gavi strategy and will be considering the role of the existing COVAX governing bodies, namely the COVAX Shareholders Council, the COVAX Consensus Group, the COVAX AMC Investors Group, as well as the AMC Engagement Group.

- 3.4 She informed participants that the Gavi Board's Governance Committee discussed this matter at its meeting in June and was informed of the ongoing consultations that are being conducted by the Co-Chairs' technical teams on this subject. The Governance Committee will discuss this topic again at its meetings in October and December, with a view to making recommendations to the Board for approval at its meeting on 7-8 December 2022.
- 3.5 She reminded participants that the Governance Committee has the mandate to make adjustments to the Terms of Reference (ToRs) for the COVAX bodies, including this group. She stressed that any adjustments to the ToRs proposed by the Governance Committee to the Board would be informed by the outcome of the Co-Chairs' consultation exercise that is underway. It is also planned to share any proposed adjustments to the ToRs with the AMC Engagement Group in writing prior to the December Governance Committee meeting and to allow the opportunity for comment.
- 3.6 Minister Sajjan provided an update on the recent Co-Chair consultations with AMC92 economies on the future of the AMC Engagement Group. He indicated that through the consultations, Co-Chairs have heard that many governments plan to continue to use the COVAX Facility for vaccine procurement in 2023 and that many value the AMC Engagement Group as a space for information sharing and discussion. He also indicated that some have suggested an interest in having this group continue into 2023, in some capacity, possibly at a more technical level.
- 3.7 He also requested that participants take a moment to provide input on a set of questions that would be circulated shortly by the Co-Chairs for response by mid-October.

Discussion

- One AMC Engagement Group member expressed support for continuing the AMC Engagement in 2023. She also commented that COVAX should: i) continue to play a role in the effort to strengthen the global health architecture; ii) continuously work with WHO on closing vaccine equity gaps and ensuring that countries have the resources needed to accelerate national strategies, and that engagement should be intensified in decision making to be more transparent and inclusive; and iii) work with partnering countries, organisations, and manufacturers to increase local manufacturing capacity for vaccines, therapeutics, and medical supplies in AMC countries, mainly in low and middle income countries (LMICs).

4. Summary, Take-Aways, and Closing Remarks

- 4.1 Derrick Sim, acting Managing Director, Office of the COVAX Facility, presented the meeting summary and key takeaways.

- 4.2 Co-Chair Tadesse thanked participants for the excellent session and encouraged countries to continue to engage to enrich the way forward and position COVAX into the future.
- 4.3 Co-Chair Sajjan concluded the meeting by thanking all participants for their efforts and indicating he was looking forward to the evolution of the AMC Engagement Group.
- 4.4 After determining that there was no further business, the meeting was brought to a close.

Attachment A – Participants

Economy

- Australia
- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- Canada
- Egypt
- El Salvador
- European Commission
- France
- Germany
- Ireland
- Japan
- Norway
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
- Twilio
- Vietnam

AMC Engagement Group member

- Margot Morris
- Adrien de Chaisemartin*
- Joshua Tabah
- Khaled Atallah*
- Ronald Pérez
- Virginija Dambrauskaite
- Anne-Sophie Travert*
- Bernhard Braune
- Paul Troy*
- Takeshi Akahori
- Anja Sletten*
- Simone Keizer Beache
- Michal Filip Kowalik
- Van Ha Thi Cam
- * *Alternate Representative*