



COVAX

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

30 November 2022

Virtual meeting

1. Welcome, Introduction and Update

- 1.1 Noting that the meeting had been duly convened, the meeting commenced at 13.05 Geneva time on 30 November 2022. Co-Chairs Retno Marsudi 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 Retno Marsudi reviewed the agenda for the meeting, noting that there would be discussions of key COVAX updates, COVID-19 vaccination delivery, and 2023 strategy. She reflected on Indonesia’s presidency of the G20 and the recent G20 summit held in Bali, which resulted in the establishment of a pandemic fund to finance critical investment to strengthen pandemic prevention and preparedness as well as response in low and middle income countries. She noted that G20 leaders had also recognised the need for cooperation to strengthen local and regional health product manufacturing capacities. She indicated that while the G20 presidency had come to an end, Indonesia remains committed to strengthening the global health architecture.
- 1.4 Co-Chair Minister Sajjan, who was only able to join the start of the meeting, commended all economies on the massive effort to increase COVID-19 vaccination and the strong progress that has been made over the past year. He signalled that as economies look to integrate COVID-19 efforts within routine health programmes, there is still work to do to increase access to vaccines for vulnerable and high-risk groups in particular.

- 1.5 Co-Chair Minister Tadesse commended countries and all those providing support to countries for the tremendous progress this year. However, she noted that equity gaps remain for some countries, regions and priority groups. She welcomed continued efforts on these gaps and the opportunity at this meeting to discuss lessons.
- 1.6 Seth Berkley, CEO, provided an update on the state of the pandemic, as per the pre-read that had been shared prior to the meeting. He noted that this is an interesting juncture in the pandemic as infection rates have started to increase again, with Omicron variants remaining dominant, and rising rates are expected to continue throughout the beginning of 2023. However, he reported that death rates are not expected to increase significantly, and this is attributable to higher population-level protection against severe disease resulting from vaccinations and natural immunity. He highlighted the continued efficacy of vaccines against severe illness and death, noting that Variant Containing Vaccines (VCVs) are also effective, but more needs to be learned about their relative benefits.
- 1.7 Siri Bjornstad, Procurement Coordinator, UNICEF Supply Division, reported on supply and delivery, noting that 1.84 billion doses has been shipped to 146 countries. She highlighted that 1.65 billion doses had been shipped to 87 AMC-funded countries and explained the breakdown of type of product. She also indicated that approximately 70 million more doses were planned for delivery from November 2022 to January 2023, but that there were still uncertainties and expected changes.
- 1.8 Derrick Sim, acting Managing Director, Office of the COVAX Facility, provided an update the work of the COVAX Facility, including the humanitarian buffer as that mechanism closes its application process.
- 1.9 Brenda Killen, Director, Governance, summarised the recommendations that would likely be put forward to the Gavi Board in December 2022 related to the COVAX governing bodies. She flagged the proposal to modify the Terms of Reference for the COVAX AMC Engagement Group to allow former members of the Shareholders Council to attend as observers and noted that a markup of the proposed revision had been provided with the pre-read materials for information and comment.

Discussion

- One AMC Engagement Group member referred to the 70 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine planned for delivery in the coming months and queried how Gavi, COVAX and UNICEF handles uncertainties and matters of short shelf life. It was clarified that for both donated doses and Advance Purchase Agreement (APA) doses, the current portfolio has sufficiently long shelf life. It was recognised that there was a continued higher risk appetite for wastage that is inherent in pandemic settings and noted that the Secretariat would continue to engage with countries through the demand planning

process to ascertain vaccine preference. It was also clarified that the 70 million doses mentioned have already been requested, allocated and accepted by countries.

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

- 2.1 Ted Chaiban, Global Lead Coordinator, COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery Partnership (CoVDP), provided an update on the progress on COVID-19 vaccination delivery and discussed critical priorities moving forward, as per the pre-read materials that were shared prior to the meeting. He expressed concern over the coverage rates of high priority groups and boosters.
- 2.2 As integration into primary health care becomes the dominant strategy, there is diminishing returns to a vertical approach to COVID-19 vaccination. He reviewed the timeline and plan for transitioning CoVDP support into enhanced agency and Alliance mechanisms and flagged that there will be consultations with a number of constituents on the transition process in early 2023.
- 2.3 Richard Mihigo, Director, COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery, Coordination and Integration – COVAX, provided an update on the Alliance support provided to countries, including technical support and COVID-19 Delivery Support (CDS) funding.
- 2.4 Dr Patricia Mupeta Bobo, Assistant Director, Child Health and Nutrition, Ministry of Health, Zambia, presented on her country's experience in COVID-19 vaccination delivery, which has now reached 70% coverage. She indicated that high level political commitment was critical, with sufficient budget allocated to support COVID-19 measures and strong leadership in coordination committees. She also noted that they had implemented a one plan one budget approach to the extent possible and used multiple media platforms to combat misinformation. She indicated that they had integrated vaccination into other services such as HIV, tuberculosis and other non communicable diseases, as well as reaching school settings.
- 2.5 Dr Mosoka Fallah Papa, Program Manager, Saving Lives and Livelihoods Initiative, Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), provided an update from the Africa CDC on the Saving Lives and Livelihoods Programme, a partnership between the Mastercard Foundation and the Africa CDC, with the goal of purchasing COVID-19 vaccines for more than 65 million Africans, and which engages across partners and platforms.

3. 2023 Strategy Update

- 3.1 Derrick Sim, acting Managing Director, Office of the COVAX Facility, provided an overview of the latest thinking on COVAX in 2023, and specifically, on cross-partner demand planning efforts, the COVAX rolling allocation process, the COVAX/CoVDP transition trajectory, and preparations to move to support a COVID-19 vaccine programme from 2024 subject to Board approval, as detailed in the pre-read materials.

Discussion

- One AMC Engagement Group member expressed support for COVAX continuing to focus its support on AMC countries and humanitarian settings, and indicated that COVAX should: i) continue to play a role in the effort to strengthen the global health architecture; and ii) continuously work with WHO on closing vaccine equity gaps and ensuring that AMC countries have the resources needed to accelerate national strategies.
- It was clarified following the presentations that there have been significant benefits from the COVID-19 response in terms of health system strengthening regarding cold chain and health management information systems, and it will be important to continue that effort in 2023. It was also highlighted that: i) it will be critical to invest in community health systems and specifically to stabilise the terms and conditions for frontline community health workers, and to link up to relevant processes like the World Health Assembly, United Nations General Assembly, and G7/G20; and ii) in addition to the many Alliance actors mentioned in the presentations today like Africa CDC, Gavi, WHO and UNICEF, it will be important to link up with actors who provide support on non communicable diseases and persons who are immunocompromised.

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 all countries to continue to engage to enrich the way forward.
- 4.3 After determining that there was no further business, the meeting was brought to a close.

Attachment A – Participants

Economy

- Canada
- Estonia
- Fiji
- France
- Germany
- Indonesia
- Italy
- Netherlands
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

AMC Engagement Group member

Mellissa Hisko*
Kaisa Mitt-Alvarez
Litiana Volavola
Anne-Sophie Travert*
Bernhard Braune
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