



**THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA  
MINISTRY OF HEALTH**

**PRESS STATEMENT**

**PRE-COVID-19 VACCINATION PRESS BRIEFING**

**9<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

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**9<sup>th</sup> March, 2021** - The Ministry of Health would like to update the general public on planned activities for the COVID-19 vaccination exercise in the country ahead of the scheduled launch date, 10<sup>th</sup>, March 2021.

### **OVERVIEW OF COVID-19 IN UGANDA**

To date over 40,000 and 344 COVID-19 cases and deaths respectively have been recorded in Uganda, with the confirmed and hospitalised caseloads progressively dropping in the past two months (January and February). This picture is a follow on of previous intense transmission during Phase 4 in the months of October, November and December 2020.

As I communicated in my last national address, this progressive drop after the peak of October, November, December 2020 had been predicted by our Scientists. Like we have seen in other countries, the likelihood of a rebound of cases (Wave 2) with much sustained and intense transmission is likely.

### **COVID-19 VACCINATION IN UGANDA**

The Government of Uganda has received donations of 964,000 doses of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine. Of this, 864,000 doses arrived on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2021 from the COVAX facility while 100,000 doses arrived on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2021 from the Government of India.

The country wide COVID-19 Vaccination exercise will begin on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2021. However, the official launch of the



vaccination exercise will take place on the 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at Mulago Specialized Women's and Neonatal Hospital. Vaccination of Health Workers of Mulago and Entebbe Regional Referral Hospital will commence immediately after the Launch. The Launch activity is scheduled to begin at 10.00am and end at 12.00pm.

The priority groups to receive the COVID-19 vaccination in a staggered manner and on days to be allocated are:

- All Health Care Workers
- Teachers among other essential social service providers
- Security personnel
- Adults aged 50 years and above
- Persons with underlying health conditions aged below 50 years
- Other essential groups including; airlines, Media, prisoners, Tour Operators and Guides, Bankers, Immigration officers, Uganda Wild Life Authority, Uganda Revenue Authority, Humanitarian Workers and Others to be Identified

**How will the target population be identified?**

To ensure all eligible persons are reached and that those reached complete the recommended doses of the vaccine within the recommended period, the COVID-19 vaccination exercise will be preceded by registration of target priority populations and the information is uploaded into an electronic database.



The initial information in the database has been built with information from NIRA, Directors/ Medical Superintendents of Hospitals, the Ministry of Public Service, The Medical Councils, Ministry of Education and Sports and the District Health Offices.

Beneficiaries will be identified using their National Identity cards or any other identification documents like Driving permits, Refugee Identity Card, Work permits and Passports. Other means will be use of Local Council leaders (LC1) or Village Health Teams (VHTs).

In the case of unregistered citizens, a guarantor's identity (preferably the next of kin, Local Council 1 or VHT), whose mobile phone contact is available, will be required before vaccination is done. Please note identification is extremely important for purposes of records, follow up and a reminder to receive your second dose of the vaccine.

**When will the priority groups be vaccinated?**

Each Priority group will be allocated days on which they can access vaccines depending on the availability of vaccines in the country. This information will be communicated by the Ministry of Health from time to time.

The First priority group to be vaccinated will be the Health Workers. All districts/Cities will start vaccination of health workers from the 11<sup>th</sup> March 2021 beginning at 8.00am with public health workers, followed by Private Not for Profit (PNFP) and end with the health



workers in the Private facilities. Vaccination of health workers will take place between 10th -15th March 2021 followed by teachers/ Lecturers from 16th to 19th March, 2021. The Other Priority groups are requested to remain patient as we purchase and /or receive more donations and allocate them appropriate dates.

### **COVID-19 Vaccines Safety and Efficacy**

The AstraZeneca vaccines, which we shall be administering starting tomorrow, is protective against severe forms of disease and deaths.

The vaccines are administered on the left upper arm. The complete dosage requires two doses of 0.5mls of the vaccine given two months apart (8 weeks).

The documented side effects of the vaccine like any other vaccines include: pain at injection site, irritation, fever and muscle ache. These side effects are mild, not experienced by everybody, and they resolve by themselves. By 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021, over 350 million people worldwide have been vaccinated and the AstraZeneca vaccine has been used in over 60 countries.

It is safe to provide the vaccine to all age groups above 18 years, pregnant and lactating mothers. Vaccination is recommended regardless of one's previous history of infection with the corona virus. Testing before vaccination is therefore not required.



### **Location of Vaccination Centers**

Vaccination service points in each district will be established at the National and Regional Referral Hospitals, District Hospitals, health center IVs and health center IIIs. Each district will have five vaccination service points located at the above mentioned facilities.

### ***What happens before and after the vaccine is given?***

All eligible persons will be required to sign a consent form before vaccination is given. Similar to all other vaccinations, persons who are vaccinated will be required to remain at the vaccination service point for at least 30 minutes for observation and capturing information into the District Health Information System (DHIS).

A vaccination card will be issued after information has been captured and the client informed when to return for his/her second dose.

Once you are at home and you have any medical concern you are kindly requested to report immediately to the nearest health facility so that proper management and treatment is provided.

### **Security of vaccines and related commodities**

The COVID-19 vaccines will be securely stored and guarded by the security forces. This is to ensure that the vaccines are NOT stolen or tampered with.



**CONCLUSION:**

Vaccination is voluntary and free of charge.

However, remember to continue following the COVID-19 SOPs to prevent spread of the disease.

Thank you for listening to me.

For God and my Country.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jane Ruth Aceng Otero'.

**Dr. Jane Ruth Aceng Otero**

**Minister for Health**

**9<sup>th</sup> March, 2021**