

# COVAX



CEPI



**Sierra Leone welcomes the arrival of Covid-19 vaccines shipped via COVAX facility**  
**Embargoed until: 20:00h (Freetown/GMT +0), Sunday 8 August 2021**

**Freetown, Sunday, 8<sup>th</sup> August 2021** – Sierra Leone has today received the second batch of 96,000 doses of the Oxford AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine donated by France and delivered by UNICEF through the COVAX Facility, a partnership between the Government of Sierra Leone, CEPI, Gavi, UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO). This French donation to COVAX is a part of Team Europe's broader effort to ensure equitable access to vaccines in lower- and middle-income countries.

This brings to 192 000 doses of the Oxford AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine, which have been received by Sierra Leone under the COVAX facility. The first batch of 96 000 doses was delivered on the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021 and this helped Sierra Leone to kick start a countrywide vaccination of eligible adults, starting with the frontline workers. The first batch of the Oxford AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines has been since fully utilized.

"This further donation from the COVAX Facility will help safeguard Sierra Leone's population from the consequences of the COVID-19 virus and begin reducing barriers to saving lives and protecting livelihoods. The Government is appreciative of the efforts made by all partners in the COVAX Facility that has made this donation possible" said Dr. Austin Demby, Minister of Health and Sanitation.

The COVAX Facility has been instrumental in supporting low and middle-income countries to receive COVID-19 vaccines and supporting governments with the development of national vaccination plans, cold chain infrastructure and related operational equipment, logistical materials and medical supplies. to facilitate smooth implementation of the vaccination activities. This first consignment of Oxford AstraZeneca received through the COVAX Facility, together with the consignment of vaccines received through other facilities, have helped reach thousands of eligible adults with the first dose and second dose of COVID-19 vaccines.

In Sierra Leone, this arrival of the new batch of vaccines is timely as the country continues responding to a third wave of COVID-19 and preparing for future eventualities.

"There is no better time than now to receive the COVID-19 vaccine to help boost our vaccination and to enhance protection against COVID-19", said Dr Steven Velabo Shongwe, World Health Organization Representative in Sierra Leone. "Vaccination is the most powerful weapon we have against the COVID-19 pandemic. But to win the fight against this dreaded disease we need to continue implementing the other recommended public health measures such as wearing face masks in public, hand-washing and social/physical distancing."

In response to the recent increase in cases, the vaccination rollout in Sierra Leone has been intensified and vaccinations are now open to all adults above the age of 18 years. The Ministry of Health and Sanitation, NACOVERC and partners have also enhanced social mobilisation efforts and media engagements to share information about the vaccine rollout and to increase public confidence on the safety and efficacy of the vaccines.

Within the coming months, the COVAX facility will deliver another batch of the AstraZeneca-Oxford COVID-19 vaccine. meanwhile, delivery of other types of vaccines - Pfizer, Johnson & Johnson and Moderna are also in the delivery pipeline to Sierra Leone through bilateral arrangements between the Government of Sierra Leone and its partners.

"COVID-19 is still among us and that is why we welcome the global collaboration of COVAX to help make vaccines widely accessible and at no cost to the population," said UNICEF Deputy Representative, Ms. Liv Elin Indreiten. "COVID-19 vaccines, together with other safety protocols such as proper wearing of face masks, ensuring a safe physical distancing, avoiding large groups, and washing hands frequently – will help to stop this pandemic and help to see a gradual return of normal lives for us and for our children."

COVAX is co-led by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), working in partnership with UNICEF as well as the World Bank, civil society organisations, manufacturers, and others. COVAX is part of the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, a ground-breaking global collaboration to accelerate development, production, and equitable access to COVID-19 tests, treatments, and vaccines.

"These vital doses of safe, effective vaccines will help protect thousands of vulnerable people against the COVID-19 wave causing so much suffering across the country," said Patience Musanhu, Gavi's Senior Country Manager for Sierra Leone. "My sincere thanks to the French government for making these important vaccines available."

COVAX has built a diverse portfolio of vaccines suitable for a range of settings and populations, and is on track to meet its goal of delivering at least 2 billion doses of vaccine to participating countries around the globe in 2021, including at least 1.3 billion donor-funded doses to the 92 lower-income COVAX Facility participants supported by the Gavi COVAX AMC. Team Europe, which brings together the European Union and its Member States, is one of the lead contributors to COVAX. France was one of the first countries to affirm its willingness to donate safe and effective WHO approved vaccines in addition to its financial contribution.

The Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the European Union Delegation to Sierra Leone, Mr Mario Caivano said that "Ensuring access to safe and affordable COVID-19 vaccines around the world, and notably for low and middle-income countries, is a priority for the EU. Team Europe (the EU, its institutions and all 27 Member States) is on track to exceed its initial goal - with 200 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines foreseen to be shared with the countries that need them most - by the end of 2021".

Officials from the Ministry of Health and Sanitation, European Union, United Nations Agencies, World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF and several health development partners, received the consignment of the vaccine today at the Lungi Airport.

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**About COVAX**

COVAX, the vaccines pillar of the [Access to COVID-19 Tools \(ACT\) Accelerator](#), is co-led by the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance (Gavi) and the World Health Organization (WHO) – working in partnership with developed and developing country vaccine manufacturers, UNICEF, the World Bank, and others. It is the only global initiative that is working with governments and manufacturers to ensure COVID-19 vaccines are available worldwide to both higher-income and lower-income countries.

CEPI is focused on the [COVAX vaccine research and development portfolio](#): investing in R&D across a variety of promising candidates, with the goal to support development of three safe and effective vaccines which can be made available to countries participating in the COVAX Facility. As part of this work, CEPI has secured first right of refusal to potentially over one billion doses for the COVAX Facility to a number of candidates, and made strategic investments in vaccine manufacturing, which includes reserving capacity to manufacture doses of COVAX vaccines at a network of facilities, and securing glass vials to hold 2 billion doses of vaccine. CEPI is also investing in the 'next generation' of vaccine candidates, which will give the world additional options to control COVID-19 in the future.

Gavi is focused on procurement and delivery for COVAX: coordinating the design, implementation and administration of the [COVAX Facility](#) and the Gavi [COVAX AMC](#) and working with its Alliance partners UNICEF and WHO, along with governments, on country readiness and delivery. The COVAX Facility is the global pooled procurement mechanism for COVID-19 vaccines through which COVAX will ensure fair and equitable access to vaccines for all 190 participating economies, using an allocation framework formulated by WHO. The COVAX Facility will do this by pooling buying power from participating economies and providing volume guarantees across a range of promising vaccine candidates. The Gavi COVAX AMC is the financing mechanism that will support the participation of 92 low- and middle-income countries in the Facility, enabling access to donor-funded doses of safe and effective vaccines. Gavi is fundraising for the COVAX AMC, and funding UNICEF procurement of vaccines as well as partners' and governments work on readiness and delivery, including support cold chain equipment,

technical assistance, syringes, vehicles, and other aspects of the vastly complex logistical operation for delivery. UNICEF and the Pan-American Health Organisation (PAHO) will be acting as procurement coordinators for the COVAX Facility, helping deliver vaccines to COVAX AMC participants and others.

WHO has multiple roles within [COVAX](#): It provides normative guidance on vaccine policy, regulation, safety, R&D, allocation, and country readiness and delivery. Its Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE) on Immunization develops evidence-based immunization policy recommendations. Its Emergency Use Listing (EUL)/prequalification programmes ensure harmonized review and authorization across member states. It provides global coordination and member state support on vaccine safety monitoring. It developed the target product profiles for COVID-19 vaccines and provides R&D technical coordination. WHO leads, along with UNICEF, the support to countries as they prepare to receive and administer vaccines. The [Country Readiness and Delivery](#) (CRD) workstream includes Gavi and numerous other partners working at the global, regional, and country-level to provide tools, guidance, monitoring, and on the ground technical assistance for the planning and roll-out of the [vaccines](#). Along with COVAX partners, WHO is also developing a no-fault compensation scheme as part of the time-limited indemnification and liability commitments.

UNICEF is leveraging its experience as the largest single vaccine buyer in the world and working with manufacturers and partners on the procurement of COVID-19 vaccine doses, as well as freight, logistics and storage. UNICEF already procures more than 2 billion doses of vaccines annually for routine immunization and outbreak response on behalf of nearly 100 countries. In collaboration with the [PAHO Revolving Fund](#), UNICEF is [leading efforts](#) to procure and supply doses of COVID-19 vaccines for COVAX. In addition, UNICEF, Gavi and WHO are working with governments around the clock to ensure that countries are ready to receive the vaccines, with appropriate cold chain equipment in place and health workers trained to dispense them. UNICEF is also playing a lead role in efforts to foster trust in vaccines, delivering vaccine confidence communications and tracking and addressing misinformation around the world.

## About CEPI

CEPI is an innovative partnership between public, private, philanthropic, and civil organisations, launched at Davos in 2017, to develop vaccines to stop future epidemics. CEPI has moved with great urgency and in coordination with WHO in response to the emergence of COVID-19. CEPI has initiated ten partnerships to develop vaccines against the novel coronavirus. The programmes are leveraging rapid response platforms already supported by CEPI as well as new partnerships.

Before the emergence of COVID-19, CEPI's priority diseases included Ebola virus, Lassa virus, Middle East Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus, Nipah virus, Rift Valley Fever and Chikungunya virus. CEPI also invested in platform technologies that can be used for rapid vaccine and immunoprophylactic development against unknown pathogens (Disease X).

## About Gavi

Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance is a public-private partnership that helps vaccinate half the world's children against some of the world's deadliest diseases. Since its inception in 2000, Gavi has helped to immunise a whole generation – over 822 million children – and prevented more than 14 million deaths, helping to halve child mortality in 73 developing countries. Gavi also plays a key role in improving global health security by supporting health systems as well as funding global stockpiles for Ebola, cholera, meningitis and yellow fever vaccines. After two decades of progress, Gavi is now focused on protecting the next generation and reaching the unvaccinated children still being left behind, employing



innovative finance and the latest technology – from drones to biometrics – to save millions more lives, prevent outbreaks before they can spread and help countries on the road to self-sufficiency. Learn more at [www.gavi.org](http://www.gavi.org) and connect with us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

The Vaccine Alliance brings together developing country and donor governments, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the World Bank, the vaccine industry, technical agencies, civil society, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and other private sector partners. View the full list of donor governments and other leading organizations that fund Gavi's work [here](#).

### About WHO

The World Health Organization provides global leadership in public health within the United Nations system. Founded in 1948, WHO works with 194 Member States, across six regions and from more than 150 offices, to promote health, keep the world safe and serve the vulnerable. Our goal for 2019-2023 is to ensure that a billion more people have universal health coverage, to protect a billion more people from health emergencies, and provide a further billion people with better health and wellbeing.

For updates on COVID-19 and public health advice to protect yourself from coronavirus, visit [www.who.int](http://www.who.int) and follow WHO on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [TikTok](#), [Pinterest](#), [Snapchat](#), [YouTube](#)

### About UNICEF

UNICEF works in some of the world's toughest places, to reach the world's most disadvantaged children. Across 190 countries and territories, we work for every child, everywhere, to build a better world for everyone. For more information about UNICEF and its work for children, visit [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org). For more information about COVID-19, visit [www.unicef.org/coronavirus](http://www.unicef.org/coronavirus). Find out more about UNICEF's work on the COVID-19 vaccines [here](#), or about UNICEF's work on immunization [here](#).

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### About the ACT-Accelerator

The Access to COVID-19 Tools ACT-Accelerator, is a new, ground-breaking global collaboration to accelerate the development, production, and equitable access to COVID-19 tests, treatments, and vaccines. It was set up in response to a call from G20 leaders in March and launched by the WHO, European Commission, France and The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in April 2020.

The ACT-Accelerator is not a decision-making body or a new organisation but works to speed up collaborative efforts among existing organisations to end the pandemic. It is a framework for collaboration that has been designed to bring key players around the table with the goal of ending the pandemic as quickly as possible through the accelerated development, equitable allocation, and scaled up delivery of tests, treatments and vaccines, thereby protecting health systems and restoring societies and economies in the near term. It draws on the experience of leading global health organisations which are tackling the world's toughest health challenges, and who, by working together, are able to unlock new and more ambitious results against COVID-19. Its members share a commitment to ensure all people have access to all the tools needed to defeat COVID-19 and to work with unprecedented levels of partnership to achieve it.