

WHO Africa (/) / Zambia launches the COVID-19 vaccination

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Zambia launches the COVID-19 vaccination

16 April 2021

The Honourable Minister of Health, Dr. Jonas Chanda officially launched the COVID-19 vaccination on 14 April 2021 at the University Teaching Hospital in Lusaka. Zambia received the first consignment of 228,000 doses of the vaccine from the COVAX facility, a global Initiative representing a partnership between the World Health Organization (WHO), Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI), United Nation's Children Fund (UNICEF) and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) working on the equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines.

The voluntary COVID-19 vaccination exercise in the country is targeting a total of 8.4 million people above the age of 18 years. The National COVID -19 Vaccine Deployment Plan has prioritised frontline health workers who are essential in sustaining the COVID-19 response, those most essential in maintaining core societal functions (teachers,

immigration, police, religious and traditional leaders), people at greatest risk of severe COVID-19 disease (those with other underlying diseases and those aged above 65 years) and the population in congregate settings.

In his launch statement, the Minister thanked the donors who are supporting the COVAX. He said that COVID-19 had devastating health, social and economic consequences and therefore all efforts are needed to control it. He emphasised that the Zambian government was clear and consistent in the COVID-19 response and that the COVID-19 vaccine was an additional tool to protect the population. The minister encouraged those eligible to accept the vaccination while emphasising that government had considered the safety and efficacy of the vaccine before making the decision to use it in the country. He was vaccinated in view full of the media as a way of leading by example.

The United States Charge d'Affaires, at the US Embassy, David Young, stated that the US had provided 2 billion Dollars to the Vaccine Alliance to support the COVAX. He said that COVID vaccination was bringing a new hope and marking the beginning of the end of COVID-19 and called for solidarity in the fight. He used this opportunity to announce a new initiative called "One world protected" which had a target of raising 2 billion dollars support for the COVAX.

The United Nations Resident Coordinator, Dr. Coumba Mar Gadio, congratulated the government for forging a multisectoral response to the COVID-19 pandemic and reiterated the continued support of the United Nations in Zambia.

The Swedish Ambassador Anna Maj Hultgård also congratulated the Government of the Republic of Zambia for achieving an important milestone in the response to COVID-19. She took the opportunity of the launch of the vaccine in Zambia to announce that the Swedish Government was allocating a total of 259 million United States Dollars to support the COVAX.

WHO and UNICEF are working in collaboration with other partners to support the government in implementing the COVID-19 vaccination campaign.

Present at this event were senior government officials, ambassadors, representatives of United Nations Agencies, private sector, civil society, traditional leaders, health workers and the media.



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