



Cairo, 1 April 2021 – Last night, Egypt received more than 850 000 COVID-19 vaccine doses shipped via the COVAX Facility. More than a year into the COVID-19 pandemic, a plane landed in Cairo carrying 854 400 doses of the Astra Zeneca Oxford vaccine produced by AstraZeneca-SK Bioscience (AZ-SKBio).

According to the Ministry of Health and Population's plan, the first segment of the population to receive the 854 400 doses will be health workers, the elderly and people with chronic diseases.

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Minister of Health and Population Dr Hala Zayed expressed her thanks to WHO and UNICEF for their constant support to Egypt's plan to contain the coronavirus pandemic. This support continues with the arrival of the first shipment of COVID-19 vaccine doses to Egypt as part of the COVAX agreement in cooperation with GAVI - the Vaccine Alliance, which will encompass 40 million vaccine doses that will arrive consecutively.

The Minister of Health and Population stressed the importance of collaboration with partners from international agencies in addressing the pandemic. Her Excellency also highlighted that this vaccine delivery will contribute to the completion of the vaccination process targeting the most at-risk citizens, including the elderly and those with underlying conditions to protect them from the virus.

“The arrival of COVID-19 vaccines through the COVAX Facility is a historical step of human solidarity during the unprecedented times that we are passing through. This is an important step to ensure the equitable global distribution of COVID-19 vaccines bringing hope to many,

including people in Egypt, through escalating the vaccination of people at risk, especially frontline health care and essential services providers. In respect to rigorous and scientific reviews, WHO has approved COVID-19 vaccines for emergency use based on their safety and effectiveness. Collectively we are to halt the pandemic as individuals, families, communities and public and private institutions through continuing to follow effective preventive public health and social measures, such as sanitation, avoiding overcrowding, especially in closed areas, keeping a physical distance and wearing masks," said Dr Naeema Al Gasseer, WHO Representative in Egypt.

"I would like to highlight the importance of health workers receiving the vaccine. They are at the forefront of the fight against COVID-19. It is a race against time to end the COVID-19 pandemic and vaccinate people, and in this race, it is critical that as many safe and effective vaccines as possible are available for the health workers," said Mr Jeremy Hopkins, UNICEF Representative in Egypt.□

The COVAX initiative, which was pivotal in last night's delivery, is trying to narrow the gap between the millions being vaccinated in some countries compared to many fewer in other parts of the world. This positive and encouraging news is somewhat of a light at the end of the tunnel, with an exit to this pandemic finally in sight. It is also an important symbol of all the efforts that UNICEF and WHO are supporting to reduce disparities between countries in the access to vaccines.

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 organizations, manufacturers, and others.

The establishment of the COVAX Facility represents a collective recognition of the need for equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines. No one is safe until everyone is safe. On behalf of all those who will be vaccinated through COVAX in Egypt, the Ministry of Health and Population, WHO AND UNICEF extend our thanks to the governments from the United States of America, Germany, United Kingdom, the European Union, Japan, Canada and many others for their support towards this goal.

U.S. Ambassador to Egypt, Jonathan R. Cohen stated: "The United States is donating US\$4 billion to support COVAX's vital work. We are excited to see them deliver the first of millions of vaccines to Egypt tonight. This is the first of many deliveries that will help our strategic partner

Egypt beat this epidemic.”

Dr Cyrill Jean Nunn, the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Egypt, said: “Global challenges can only be tackled on an international level – the pandemic does not stop at borders. The delivery of vaccines we see today is the tangible result of a great ongoing international effort and Germany is very proud to be part of it. ACT-A and COVAX are our multilateral and inclusive answer to the pandemic. No country can be safe as long as others are not.”

Sir Geoffrey Adams, British Ambassador to Egypt, said: “I am delighted to see that the first shipment under the COVAX vaccine scheme has now arrived in Egypt. Since the beginning of this crisis, the United Kingdom has been committed to ensuring equitable vaccine distribution among all countries, protecting those most at need. This is why the UK has pledged £1.3bn of aid to end the COVID-19 pandemic as quickly as possible, and we’ve put over £548m into the COVAX AMC scheme. These 850 000 doses delivered today are a great first step – or a shot in the arm, as we say in the UK. But we need to keep up the momentum. We are pledging £1.65bn to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, over the next 5 years – ensuring fair and equitable vaccine access for all.

“Today Egypt receives its first COVAX delivery. The European Union launched its “Team Europe” initiative, together with the EU Member States and European Financial Institutions, to support partner countries in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic and its consequences. The “Team Europe” package reaches almost €38.5 billion. The European Union is committed to ensuring that everyone who needs a vaccine gets it, anywhere in the world. No one is safe until everyone is safe. COVAX is the best vehicle for delivering on international vaccine solidarity. Team Europe has contributed over €2.2 billion, including €1 billion from the EU budget, for the COVAX Facility to help secure 1.3 billion doses of vaccination. This comes in addition to national contributions by EU Member States. One out of 3 vaccines delivered by COVAX has been possible through Team Europe support. I am pleased that the first COVAX delivery arrived in Egypt, a key partner country in the Region. Since March 2020, the Team Europe approach provided the framework for a coordinated COVID-19 response in Egypt. We have mobilized €1.8 billion in grants, loans and guarantees to help mitigate the impact of the outbreak in response to the immediate health crisis and the resulting socioeconomic and sanitary needs,” said Ambassador Christian Berger, Head of the European Union Delegation to Egypt.

“Canada is committed to a robust global effort to end COVID-19 and the devastating health, social and economic effects it has on the most vulnerable, both here in Egypt and around the world,” said H.E. Louis Dumas, Ambassador of Canada in Egypt.

Notes to editors

Download [multimedia content](#) including photos and B-roll of the vaccines landing in Cairo, Egypt after being transported by UNICEF (additional material will be added).

[List of donor pledges to the Gavi COVAX AMC](#)

COVAX is working to ensure that all countries participating in the Facility (currently 190, including Egypt) will have equitable access to at least 2 billion doses of the COVID-19 vaccine by the end of 2021. The additional consignments of the vaccines for Egypt are expected to arrive in the second quarter of 2021.

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