

# Government to join COVID-19 vaccine Global Access Facility

The Government today (September 4) announced that it had submitted the expression of interest to participate in the COVID-19 vaccine Global Access Facility (COVAX Facility), being part of Hong Kong's two-pronged strategy for procurement of vaccines. The COVAX Facility, co-led by the Vaccine Alliance (Gavi), the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) and the World Health Organization (WHO), aims to foster research and development (R&D) as well as production of COVID-19 vaccines, to ensure fair and equitable distribution of vaccines to places around the world and to protect the most vulnerable populations. The aim is to have the vaccines delivered to the participating countries/economies by end 2021.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau said, "Although according to the WHO, currently no vaccine for preventing COVID-19 has yet obtained regulatory approval for human application, we foresee that global competition will be very keen once an efficacious vaccine emerges. Therefore, Hong Kong needs to take early action to reserve potential vaccines for our population in a timely manner. Taking part in the COVAX Facility can serve as a safety net for Hong Kong to a certain extent."

In view that the COVAX Facility would only be able to serve a proportion of Hong Kong's population and the vaccines may only be delivered to Hong Kong by end 2021, the Government, having regard to scientific evidence and clinical data and in consultation with the relevant scientific committees under the Department of Health (DH), will pursue additional supplies through Advance Purchase Agreements with individual vaccine developers. To this end, the DH is trying to learn more about the situation of R&D as well as preparation for production of vaccines in other places (including the Mainland), so as to facilitate study and discussion by the scientific committees.

"The Government will continue to adopt the two-pronged strategy to procure vaccines meeting the criteria of safety, efficacy and quality for our population to protect public health," the spokesman said.