

UK begins donating millions of COVID-19 vaccines overseas

- nine million vaccines to be donated bilaterally and offered to COVAX to help tackle COVID-19 abroad
- the vaccines are expected to start leaving the UK this week, with Indonesia, Jamaica and Kenya among countries set to receive doses
- the UK has pledged to donate 100 million vaccines overseas by June 2022, 80 million of which will go to COVAX

The UK will this week begin delivering 9 million COVID-19 vaccines around the world, including to Indonesia, Jamaica and Kenya, to help tackle the pandemic, Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab announced today (Wednesday 28 July).

Five million doses are being offered to COVAX, the scheme to ensure equitable, global access to COVID-19 vaccines. COVAX will urgently distribute them to lower-income countries via an equitable allocation system which prioritises delivering vaccines to people who most need them. Another 4 million doses will be shared directly with countries in need.

Indonesia will receive 600,000 doses, 300,000 will be sent to Jamaica and 817,000 are to be transported to Kenya, among other countries.

The UK is donating the University of Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, made by Oxford Biomedica in Oxford and packaged in Wrexham, North Wales.

This is the first tranche of the 100 million vaccines the Prime Minister pledged the UK would share within the next year at last month's G7 in Cornwall, with 30 million due to be sent by the end of the year. At least 80 million of the 100 million doses will go to COVAX, with the rest going to countries directly. The donations will help meet the pledge that G7 leaders made to vaccinate the world and end the pandemic in 2022.

This week's deployment will help meet the urgent need for vaccines from countries around the world, including in Africa, South East Asia and the Caribbean. These regions are experiencing high levels of COVID-19 cases, hospitalisations and deaths.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

The UK is sending 9 million doses of AstraZeneca vaccine, the first batch of the 100 million doses we've pledged, to get the most vulnerable parts of the world vaccinated as a matter of urgency.

We're doing this to help the most vulnerable, but also because we know we won't be safe until everyone is safe.

The UK has been at the forefront of the global response to COVID-19,

including through investing £90 million to support the development of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine. Over half a billion doses of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine have been delivered at a non-profit price globally, with two-thirds going to lower- and middle-income countries.

The UK also kick-started efforts to establish COVAX in 2020, providing a total of £548 million to fund vaccines for lower income countries. The scheme has delivered more than 152 million vaccine doses to over 137 countries and territories, including in 83 lower-middle income countries. 65% of the initial vaccine doses have been Oxford-AstraZeneca. COVAX aims to deliver 1.8 billion vaccines to lower-income countries around the world by early 2022.

Health Secretary Sajid Javid said:

This is a global pandemic and COVID-19 vaccines are the best way to protect people and prevent the emergence of new variants. We want to make sure developing countries can build a wall of defence against the virus as we have in the UK through our vaccine rollout.

The UK is one of the largest donors to COVAX and this donation is part of our pledge to send 100 million vaccines to some of the world's poorest countries.

The Government has secured enough doses for all UK residents, crown dependencies and overseas territories to support our ongoing vaccination programme and booster programme.

Dr Seth Berkley, CEO of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, which is co-leading COVAX alongside the World Health Organization and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, said:

The UK has been a steadfast supporter of COVAX since its inception and this announcement comes at an important time.

Global vaccine demand is far outstripping supply, leaving millions of the most vulnerable unprotected, while higher vaccine coverage worldwide is one of our best shields against new variants.

In this pandemic nobody is safe until everyone is safe.

Sir Mene Pangalos, Executive Vice President BioPharmaceuticals R&D at AstraZeneca, said:

Each day we're making progress in our mission to change the course of this pandemic by providing broad and equitable access to AstraZeneca's vaccine. We are proud that over 80% of countries across the world have received doses of our vaccine, with two thirds supplied to lower middle income and low income countries.

The close collaboration between UK Government and our academic and industry partners is critical to ensure we deliver vaccines at speed and protect as many people as possible against this deadly virus.

Notes to editors

- the 9 million Oxford-AstraZeneca doses being donated are not needed for the domestic rollout. The doses will be UK-branded
- five million vaccines are being offered to COVAX, the global scheme to get COVID-19 vaccines to developing countries, to be delivered to the most vulnerable countries. Further details will be announced in due course
- the UK has also signed agreements with Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Cambodia, Guyana, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kenya, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Thailand and Vietnam to receive up to 4 million doses
- the vaccines doses being donated on a bilateral basis are being transported by Crown Agents
- details of future donations will be announced in due course. Around 80% of the total 100 million doses will go to COVAX, and the remainder will be shared bilaterally with countries in need
- the UK provided £90 million to support the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine: £25 million on the initial research and development, and £65 million to scale up manufacturing.
- the UK made it clear as part of that funding that the vaccine should be affordable around the world and consequently AstraZeneca agreed to distribute it at a non-profit price during the pandemic
- the cost of this donation has been funded through UK Official Development Assistance, and will come over and above the ODA spending target of 0.5% of GNI if needed