

UK donates COVID-19 vaccines to Malawi

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, 80 million of which will go to COVAX, a scheme that ensures equitable, global access to Covid-19 vaccines.

The consignment arrived into Malawi on Saturday, 14 August 2021, through Kamuzu International Airport. Malawi's Health Minister Hon Khumbize Kandodo Chiponda received the vaccines on behalf of the Malawi Government.

Speaking during the handover ceremony, British High Commission Charge d'Affaires, Fiona Ritchie, said:

At this time when Malawi continues to be heavily impacted by Covid-19, evidenced by high levels of cases, hospitalisations and deaths, 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's donation is the outcome of the pledge that G7 leaders made to vaccinate the world and end the pandemic as a matter of urgency.

Minister of Health, Hon Khumbize Kandodo Chiponda said:

We are very grateful for the UK Government's donation of 119,040 doses of Oxford-AstraZeneca Vaccines which will support the Covid-19 response. This will help us realise our goal of vaccinating around 3.8 million Malawians, particularly frontline workers and the most vulnerable, so we can put this pandemic behind us and focus on growing the economy.

UNICEF Malawi Acting Representative Tedla Damte said:

As Governments and the COVAX facility partners work hard to make COVID-19 vaccines affordable and accessible to all countries, we must do our part- get the vaccine to protect ourselves, our families, our communities and our children from this deadly and disruptive pandemic. Together we can end COVID-19.

WHO Representative for Malawi, Dr. Nonhlanhla Dlamini said

Our WHO experts have reassured us that for all of the variants of concern, including the Delta variant, the vaccines remain effective against severe disease and death. This is a very good sign. I'm urging our frontline workers and all priority groups to come forward and get their jabs.

The UK helped 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. Sixty- five per cent 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.

The UK provided £90 million to support the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine: £25m on the initial research and development, and £65m to scale up manufacturing.