

Covid-19 Vaccine: Preparations and considerations for the successful introduction and roll-out in Uganda
KERU, MakSPH

Date: **Friday 5th February 2021**

Time: **12:30PM- 2:00PM**

Mode of delivery: **Zoom**

Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAlde6uqzWjEt3cFAcTlHyWWzxBx4d7dr0j>



CONTEXT

The Covid-19 pandemic has spread across the world and put a significant strain on the health systems of many countries, including the hitherto strong health systems. Efforts have been made to develop a vaccine to boost people's immunity to fight the COVID -19 virus. In December 2020, developed countries such as the USA, UK, Italy among others rolled out Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine to their population. Other countries such as China and Russia also developed and rolled out vaccines to their population. Uganda has indeed expressed interest as of 7th December 2020 under the Covax facility to access approximately nine million doses of the vaccine to cover 20 percent of the population.

According to WHO, there are currently more than 50 COVID-19 ongoing vaccine trials. What remains of debate, however, is when will the low-income/developing countries get access to these vaccines if approved. Further, a debate on how prepared these

countries are in terms of resources for purchase, storage, and delivery of the vaccines is still narrow.

Unlike existing vaccines with fairly known delivery procedures, COVID-19 vaccines will be new in Uganda; therefore, an understanding of the preparations made for its rollout is critical to ensure the protection of the Ugandans against the pandemic.

Against this background, the ***Knowledge Management and Evidence Response Unit (KERU)***, at the Makerere University School of Public Health in collaboration with the Ministry of Health has organized a zoom stakeholders seminar in which Uganda's preparations to roll out the Covid-19 vaccine and its related activities will be deliberately discussed.

OBJECTIVES OF THE SEMINAR

The seminar is aimed at engaging researchers, academicians, policy and decision-makers, and all stakeholders to discuss Uganda's preparations to roll out the COVID 19 vaccine to the population when it becomes available.

It is hoped that after this discussion, stakeholders will be able to:

- a. Appreciate the key considerations taken to roll out a new vaccine such as the Covid-19 vaccine.
- b. Appreciate the current efforts made in the country to roll out COVID- 19 Vaccine.
- c. Understand the MOH Covid -19 vaccine deployment plan.
- d. Appreciate the role of WHO in ensuring equitable distribution of Vaccines.
- e. Draw lessons for the country to prepare for pandemics like COVID-19 that befell the entire world.

PARTICIPANTS

The seminar will be open to the public. However, targeted participation is for researchers, academicians, policymakers, journalists, development partners, and Civil society organizations involved inequitable access to health services. It is anticipated that more than 50 participants will join this seminar. Panelists have been drawn from key organizations involved in Research, Policy decision-making & implementation, and development partners directly involved in the area of health service delivery specifically immunization. These include WHO, Ministry of Health, Makerere University

School of Public Health, National Covid-19 task force, USAID, UVRI, UNICEF, GAVI among others

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

1. Improved appreciation by the stakeholders of the government efforts to enroll covid 19 vaccines in the country
2. Discussions on the different steps the government has taken to develop a covid -19 vaccine and its deployment plan
3. Report documenting highlights of the proceedings and related visibility products such as newspaper articles and blogs.

DETAILED SESSION PLAN

This zoom engagement is organized as follows:

Welcome: Introductions, session objectives, and expectations (10 minutes)

Chair/Moderator: Assoc. Prof. Elizeus Rutebemberwa, MakSPH

Purpose:

- Understanding Panellists' profiles
- Identifying key participants from strategic stakeholder institutions
- Elaboration of session objectives

Method:

- The chair will read out the brief profiles of the panelists, and also identify strategic members on the panel and what they do within the context of the current discussion.
- The chair will briefly mention (or on shared 1 slide, the objectives of the session and expected outcomes

Outcomes:

- Understanding of the panelist's profiles and some key members within the audience as well as the objectives of the session

Presentation 1: What are the key considerations for rolling out a new vaccine such as COVID -19? (20 minutes)

Panelist 1: Dr. Juliet Babirye- Senior Lecturer -Department of Disease Control and Environmental Health- Makerere University School of Public Health

Purpose:

- To present the steps followed to develop and roll a new vaccine. This will entail a reflection on current vaccines administered in the country.

- Highlight key safety issues around the new COVID-19 vaccines
- How to monitor AEFI in a huge vaccination campaign as COVID-19 vaccination

Method:

- PowerPoint presentation (20 minutes)
- Questions and inquiries will be kept till the end of the presentations

Outcomes:

- Appreciation of the steps a vaccine undergoes to be accepted in the country and its eventual rollout.

Presentation 2: The role of Implementing Partners in ensuring equitable provision and distribution of vaccines in Uganda (20 minutes)

Panelist 2: Annet Kisakye- Cluster Lead -Immunisation and vaccine Development/ Family Reproductive Health cluster WHO Uganda Office

Purpose:

- To present the role of WHO in ensuring acquisition and distribution of Vaccines.
- Present lessons that can be learned from the WHO perspective on rolling out a vaccine.
- To discuss the key equity considerations that Uganda needs to prioritize when deploying Covid-19 vaccines.
- Highlight some of the logistical challenges in terms of the cold chain management, transportation, storage, and other consumables for a vaccine.

Method:

- PowerPoint presentation (20 minutes)
- Questions and inquiries will be kept till the end of the presentations

Outcomes:

- An appreciation of the role of WHO in vaccines distribution and deployment

Presentation 3: How Prepared is Uganda regarding COVID-19 Vaccine rollout? (20 minutes)

Panelist 3: Dr.Alfred Driwale-Assistant Commissioner Vaccines and Immunisation -MOH

Purpose:

- Explaining the status of the COVID-19 pandemic in Uganda.
- Highlight the efforts made to acquire the vaccine (internal and external efforts)

- Address concerns on when will Uganda receive the first consignments, priority distribution, and equitable access.
- Costs of the vaccine for an individual and the involvement of the private sector in the acquisition and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines
- Understanding of Uganda's Covid-19 vaccine acquisition and deployment Plan in light of the logistics, human resources, and other necessities.

Method:

- The panelist will make a PowerPoint Presentation (20 minutes)
- All questions will be reserved until all presentations are complete

Outcomes:

- Understanding of covid-19 vaccine deployment plan and the government efforts to ensure its rollout?

Open discussions (30 minutes)

Moderator/Chair: Assoc. Prof. Elizeus Rutebemberwa

Method:

- Plenary Discussion (Question and Answer approach, moderated by a chair. Questions to be taken in phases
- Chair/moderator to summarise the issues and take-home message