



African Vaccine Acquisition Trust delivers 12 000 doses of COVID-19 vaccine to the African Union

Vaccination will allow the AU Commission to return to work

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA, 3 SEPTEMBER 2021 - The African Union (AU), through the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), has worked with the African Vaccine Acquisition Trust (AVAT) to secure 12,000 doses of the Johnson and Johnson single-shot COVID-19 vaccine for the African Union Commission (AUC) staff, AU Embassies' staff and their dependents. The vaccines were handed over to the African Union's Medical Health Services Directorate (MHSD) today. They arrived on the 1st of September.

The vaccines, partly manufactured in South Africa, were imported with the support of the government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Being able to offer vaccines to all AUC and AU Embassy staff and their dependents is also an important step in securing the AU's business continuity.

The AU MHSD is responsible for administering the vaccines to the AUC and African Union Embassy staff and dependents. Vaccination for AU staff members started immediately after the handover, following prior communication on the procedures and logistics by MHSD.

African Union Commission Deputy Chairperson Dr Monique Nsanzabaganwa noted that, to date, only 25.5% of the AU Commission and the community of the AU member states based in Addis Ababa are fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

"This figure is far below where we need to be, in order to be near normalcy and return to work. It is therefore pertinent that all staff and supervisors should encourage colleagues to get vaccinated as this is the only way for us to return to our previous working environment", she said.

Africa CDC Director Dr John Nkengasong welcomed the arrival of the vaccines: "Only high vaccination levels will allow us to return to work and near normalcy. We are glad to be able to offer the single-shot Johnson and Johnson vaccine, with its track record of safety and efficacy, to the Commission and Embassy staff and their dependents."

AU Special Envoy and AVAT coordinator Mr Strive Masiyiwa said: "We are pleased that we have been able to secure these vaccines which were paid for through donors through the African Vaccine Acquisition Trust." Mr Masiyiwa also confirmed that Ethiopia had placed a large order of the Johnson and Johnson vaccines for its citizens through the AVAT, the first monthly shipment arriving during the same time.

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About AVAT

The African Vaccine Acquisition Trust (AVAT) is a special purpose vehicle, incorporated in Mauritius. AVAT acts as a centralised purchasing agent on behalf of the African Union (AU) Member States, to secure the necessary vaccines and blended financing resources for achieving Africa's COVID-19 vaccination strategy which targets vaccinating a minimum of 60% of Africa's population based on a whole-of-Africa approach. AVAT was established by the COVID-19 African Vaccine Acquisition Task Team, which was set up in November 2020 by President Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa, in his capacity as Chairperson of the African Union (AU), as a support component to the COVID-19 Immunisation Strategy that was endorsed by the AU Bureau of Heads of State and Government in August 2020. AVAT's main partner institutions are the African Union's Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).

About Africa CDC

Africa CDC is a specialized technical institution of the African Union that strengthens the capacity and capability of Africa's public health institutions as well as partnerships to detect and respond quickly and effectively to disease threats and outbreaks, based on data-driven interventions and programmes. Learn more at: www.africacdc.org

About the African Union

The African Union spearheads Africa's development and integration in close collaboration with African Union Member States, the Regional Economic Communities and African citizens. AU Vision: to accelerate progress towards an integrated, prosperous and inclusive Africa, at peace with itself, playing a dynamic role in the continental and global arena, effectively driven by an accountable, efficient and responsive Commission.

Learn more at: <http://www.au.int/en>

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