

Statement on UK travel restrictions

September 24, 2021

The **Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC)**, a Specialised Technical Institution of the African Union, noted with deep concern the planned changes to international travel rules in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, communicated by the Government of the United Kingdom (U.K), which will be enforced starting at 4:00 am on Monday 4th October 2021.

According to U.K government sources¹, the new rules will discriminate between the recipients of COVID-19 vaccines not based on the vaccine received but on the region in which these vaccines were received. Travellers whose vaccination is not recognised based on where they received the vaccines, including but not limited to the African Union Member States, will have to take additional measures resulting in a significant financial and social burden. These extra measures include two additional tests (pre-departure and "day 8 test" and quarantine for ten days. The sources provide no further explanation and rationale behind this new rules.

The restrictions will therefore apply to persons having received vaccines through the COVAX programme, of which the U.K is one of the largest supporters, with over USD 700 million as well as 80 million vaccine doses pledged to the programme. The COVAX supplies constitute almost half of the COVID-19 vaccines supplied to the African continent to date.

We are deeply concerned that policies and rules such as this carry a risk of deepening vaccine hesitancy across Africa and creates distrust in the community.

Given the severe consequences of the rules, the Africa CDC therefore urge the U.K government to a) reconsider their decision and b) with the African Union to discuss how to ensure mutual recognition of vaccines provided through its donations. This will help avoid further restrictions on the movement of the African population, which is already impacted by the limited access to vaccines. As of today and mainly due to supply restrictions, while more than 40 per cent of the world population have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, only about 4.0 per cent of the African population are fully vaccinated.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/red-amber-and-green-list-rules-for-entering-england#not-vaccinated>

