

## INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

Press Release No: 133/2021

Date: 9 December, 2021

Venue: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

### **Africa CDC calls for more COVID-19 vaccination uptake amid Omicron variant worrying surge**

“There’s no need to panic about the new Omicron variant because we have the tools to fight against COVID-19 and all the different variants. Vaccines are available and continue to flow around the continent steadily, and we also encourage the public to get vaccinated against the virus because it is the only way to protect yourself.”

This was said recently by Dr John Nkengasong, the Director of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Africa CDC, in an address to the media. He also added that:

“Africa CDC is concerned about the southern part of Africa most, but the situation can and will be managed. We are more prepared to deal with the new wave, and we have deployed respondents, commodities, and supply materials that are necessary to fight against the new wave and stop it from spreading.”

Dr Nkengasong’s comments came amid rising concerns among health experts, scientists, and the world about the new iteration of the SARS-CoV-2 (coronavirus) known as the Omicron variant.

Ever since the coronavirus outbreak in 2019, COVID-19 has kept evolving into different versions, including the Delta, Novel, Gamma, and Alpha, with the latest, the Omicron variant, being identified as a variant of concern by the WHO.

For much of the past two years of the pandemic, global leaders and governments have adopted different measures, including travel restrictions and lockdowns, as a way of controlling the spread of COVID-19 among their populations. However, Dr. Nkengasong believes that; “travel restrictions have never stopped the COVID-19 variants from spreading, but we have to respect what countries are doing in the interest of protecting their citizens.”

As of December 2, a total of 8.6 million COVID-19 cases had been reported across all 55 member states of the African Union. Over 223,000 people have lost their lives, accounting for 4.3% percent of the COVID-19 cases reported globally.

#### **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 and 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](http://www.africacdc.org)

**For further information, please contact:**

Mrs Wynne Musabayana | Head of Communication | Information and Communication Directorate | African Union Commission | **E-mail:** [MusabayanaW@africa-union.org](mailto:MusabayanaW@africa-union.org) | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Edward Kalema | Information and Communication Directorate | African Union Commission | **Email:** [KalemaE@africa-union.org](mailto:KalemaE@africa-union.org) | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

**Information and Communication Directorate**, African Union Commission | **E-mail:** [DIC@africa-union.org](mailto:DIC@africa-union.org)  
**Web:** [au.int](http://au.int) | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia | **Follow Us:** [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#) | [YouTube](#)