COVID-19 FACT SHEET

Global VAX: An ‘Initiative for Global Vaccine Access’
To Turn Vaccines In Vials Into Vaccinations In Arms Around the World

The United States is committed to ending the acute phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, both at home and abroad, and has been instrumental in the global fight against the virus. To date, the U.S. government has responded in more than 120 countries to fight against COVID-19.

The emergence of COVID-19 hotspots and the Delta and Omicron variants underscore the importance of sustaining this effort. Vaccinating the world is the best way to combat the emergence of future variants that could threaten the health of Americans and undermine our economic recovery. As more COVID-19 vaccine supply flows to low- and middle-income countries, the United States and other donors must redouble efforts to help countries efficiently receive, distribute, and administer doses.

In December 2021, as part of the U.S. government’s commitment to global frontline efforts to get shots into arms and save lives around the world, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Administrator Samantha Power announced the U.S. Government’s Initiative for Global Vaccine Access, or Global VAX. Led by USAID in close partnership with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other U.S. agencies and departments, Global VAX mobilizes U.S. government resources and expertise toward the global goal of vaccinating 70 percent of the population of every country against COVID-19 in 2022. It builds on the extraordinary commitment President Biden has made to donate more than 1.2 billion vaccine doses by the end of 2022 and intensifies U.S. efforts to get shots in arms. This initiative expands assistance and enhances international coordination to identify and rapidly overcome vaccine access barriers, with a specific emphasis on scaling up vaccination support in sub-Saharan Africa.

Global VAX is a whole-of-government effort, through which the United States has already committed more than $1.7 billion to support vaccine readiness work. Global VAX includes a wide range of activities to help turn vaccines in vials into vaccinations in arms. Efforts include investing in cold chain and supply logistics to safely store and transport vaccines; building mobile vaccination sites to bring vaccinations to people living in hard-to-reach and rural areas; assisting with strategic planning to deploy more health care workers and resources; fighting mis- and disinformation to increase vaccine confidence and demand; training clinical and non-clinical personnel to scale-up COVID-19 vaccination efforts; and developing health information systems to ensure that vaccines are distributed equitably and safely.

The U.S. government has called on all countries to likewise step up actions and commitments toward enhancing access to global COVID-19 vaccines. Achieving global goals to beat back the COVID-19 pandemic will require increased efforts from countries, donors, and other partners. Additionally, the U.S. government, through Global VAX, also seeks to significantly enhance
international coordination for vaccination assistance and is calling on other countries to urgently increase contributions and to identify and rapidly overcome barriers to vaccine access and demand as they are experienced by communities around the world.

Global VAX builds on USAID’s more than 30 years of experience in strengthening routine immunization around the world and significant investments by the U.S government, including USAID, CDC, Department of State through the U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), Department of Defense (DoD), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Peace Corps, U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), and Department of Treasury to make sure countries are ready to receive large vaccine shipments. This work is already paying dividends, but there is more to do.

**An Unprecedented Effort: Building On Our Progress To Date**

**Investments to Increase Global Vaccine Supply and Fight COVID-19 are Paying Off**

When President Biden made the commitment to become the world’s “arsenal of vaccines,” the United States took on an unprecedented challenge to help bridge global vaccine supply gaps. Today, we are the single largest donor to COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access, or COVAX, the global partnership to procure and deliver vaccines equitably for countries in need. The United States has committed to purchasing and donating one billion doses of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccines worldwide, bringing the total doses donated by the United States to more than 1.2 billion. That equates to approximately three doses abroad for every one dose administered to date in the United States.

As of May 2022, the United States has already donated over half a billion COVID-19 vaccines, all free of charge, to 115 countries in every region of the world—more doses than any other nation.

U.S. leadership in this fight extends beyond the generosity of COVID-19 vaccine donations—the U.S. government has helped facilitate key deals between vaccine companies and partner institutions. For example, the United States brokered a landmark supply deal between Moderna and the African Union, giving up space in Moderna’s production queue to enable the African Union to access 30 million vaccine doses earlier. The DFC invested in expanding vaccine production in multiple developing countries while also providing political risk insurance to COVAX. And the U.S. government facilitated a breakthrough deal between Johnson & Johnson (J&J) and COVAX to allow the J&J vaccine to be supplied to the COVAX Humanitarian Buffer—an effort to ensure vaccines are available and accessible to extremely vulnerable populations that are not being covered by national vaccination plans.

Global VAX builds upon the foundations built through decades of U.S. investment in global health, including PEPFAR’s critical investment of more than $15 billion since 2003 in building and strengthening local health systems and infrastructure; the President’s Malaria Initiative (PMI); Maternal and Child Health programs; and projects focused on curbing infectious disease, promoting global health security, and advancing family planning and reproductive health.
Targeted Surge Support in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2022

Global VAX encompasses all the U.S. government’s work in over 100 countries experiencing significant challenges to vaccine delivery and will help improve the conditions necessary to accelerate uptake. Additionally, Global VAX is surging intensive financial, technical, and diplomatic support to an initial group of countries with significant need and potential for rapid progress: Angola, Côte d’Ivoire, Eswatini, Ghana, Lesotho, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia.

The surge countries were assessed based on a variety of quantitative and qualitative factors, including the burden of COVID-19 on a country’s population; a country’s ability to administer and deliver vaccines in the absence of supply constraints; the current capacity of a country’s health system; the opportunity for additional U.S. investments to be used effectively and rapidly; and the strength of our longstanding partnership.

These countries will receive increased U.S. government engagement and funding to rapidly assess needs and scale up the rate of vaccination, including support from experts here in the United States and in partner countries. We will work in close coordination with international partners, respective partner country governments, U.S. Embassies and Missions, local partners, and health experts and practitioners serving on the front lines.

As the situation remains fluid in many countries with respect to COVID-19 vaccination, USAID will periodically reevaluate whether to expand the number of surge countries as conditions and budgets allow.

A Whole-of-Government Effort
The White House has designated USAID as the lead federal agency for the whole-of-government Global VAX initiative, in close partnership with the CDC. Global VAX brings together the capabilities of USAID, CDC, Department of State, including the Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator (S/GAC), DoD, HHS, Peace Corps, DFC, Department of Treasury, and other interagency partners under a whole-of-government effort. This approach will allow Global VAX to leverage the full range of the U.S. government’s global health programs, prioritizing the most effective and efficient approach to respond to the evolving COVID-19 crisis.

In the 11 Global VAX surge countries, with oversight from the Chief of Mission, USAID Mission Directors will coordinate Global VAX interagency planning and implementation, in close partnership with CDC and in cooperation with all interagency partners. Global VAX country teams will actively engage with bilateral and multilateral partners, global initiatives, civil society, and the private sector to support Global VAX program implementation and to leverage complementary investments and programs. Country teams will work collaboratively and in coordination with partner governments to ensure gaps are filled in partnership with other donors and government funding.
At the headquarters level, USAID convenes a Global VAX Interagency Council, composed of empowered agency decision-makers from all relevant U.S. government agencies, to provide policy-level guidance on Global VAX goals, objectives, and implementation.

**U.S. Efforts Deliver Results Around the World**

USAID, the Department of State through PEPFAR, the CDC, and the DoD have successfully supported many countries around the world by scaling up vaccine delivery and distribution efforts. For example:

- In Cameroon, where persistent hesitancy has contributed to low COVID-19 vaccine uptake, USAID, CDC, and PEPFAR have assessed key drivers of vaccine hesitancy and acceptance. The assessments informed USAID-produced radio, television, and newspaper materials to promote the government’s national COVID-19 vaccination campaign conducted in November 2021. The U.S. Embassy also erected a tent in Yaoundé where USAID supported vaccination activities. The campaign proved successful: during the first five days of the campaign, 274,000 Cameroonians received their first dose of the vaccine, and 70,000 received their second dose.

- In Mali, CDC, in partnership with local organizations, is supporting the Ministry of Health to implement its vaccination program. This includes training more than 800 health care workers throughout five regions. CDC is also helping Mali conduct a knowledge, attitudes, and practices survey to improve understanding of vaccine demand and hesitancy.

- In El Salvador, where 67.9 percent of the population has received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, USAID funded the installment of 39 remote temperature monitoring devices in the national and regional depots where vaccines are stored, enabling the Ministry of Health to remotely monitor cold storage temperatures, quickly identify and address any issues, and help get more vaccines to the last mile.

- In Peru, DoD has provided 200 portable cold storage units to assist storing vaccines, especially for remote areas. The Ministry of Health transported and delivered the donated equipment to the various regions across the country.

- In Nigeria, CDC built upon its 20-year history of working with the Ministry of Health on HIV prevention and control through PEPFAR, polio eradication, and health emergencies to support COVID-19 vaccine rollout.

- In Zambia, USAID’s COVID-19 support played a key role in the launch of a COVID-19 vaccine campaign in the Copperbelt region focused on getting two million people vaccinated by the end of the year. As part of this effort, USAID is supporting extensive door-to-door community outreach and events at soccer stadiums, and more. U.S. government support to the Government of the Republic of Zambia aided in nearly doubling the fully vaccinated rate in Copperbelt Province from 12 percent to 22 percent.
in just one month, contributing to an estimated two million vaccine doses administered nationally by the end of 2021.

- In Bangladesh, USAID recently transferred four new ultra-cold freezer trucks to the government to safely transport millions of COVID-19 vaccines across the country. Fourteen more trucks are on the way, enabling millions more to receive vaccines.

- In Laos, DoD has provided 36 medical-grade ultra-low cold storage units to store COVID-19 vaccines. These freezers will be distributed in cooperation with the Laos Ministry of Health to strategic provinces as part of their National Vaccine Distribution Plan. Long term, strategic placement of these freezers will enhance the capability of medical providers in local health care systems to deliver a higher standard of care during public health emergencies.

- In Kosovo, USAID is supporting the government’s vaccination efforts in marginalized communities with low vaccine uptake. More than 8,000 volunteers engaged in door-to-door campaigns in marginalized Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian communities in 13 Kosovo municipalities to raise awareness, address concerns, and increase vaccine confidence and uptake.

- In Côte d’Ivoire, USAID supported a campaign that administered 2.3 million COVID-19 vaccine doses in December alone. Paired with a USAID-supported radio campaign across 21 local stations reminding Ivorians of the effectiveness of vaccines, this resulted in an increase in vaccination rates from 22 percent to 36 percent.

- In Thailand, CDC worked with government partners to integrate COVID-19 surveillance into the existing influenza surveillance systems to improve outbreak detection and to evaluate vaccine effectiveness.

- In Tunisia, DoD has provided four Level I Mobile Clinics to assist the Ministry of Health in vaccination activities as well as to provide necessary medical services and care to COVID-19 patients.

- In Belize, CDC supported the Ministry of Health and Wellness to increase the number of trained staff to administer vaccines. CDC training focused on measuring dosages, timing between shots administered, monitoring for adverse symptoms after vaccination, and proper documentation. This surge workforce has been instrumental in Belize, delivering at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine to 72.5 percent of the eligible population.

- In Georgia, CDC collaborated with the Ministry of Health and community partners to strengthen vaccine communication plans to promote vaccine benefits and safety and dispel rumors contributing to lower levels of confidence in rural settings.
In **Uganda**, U.S. support of the country’s Accelerated Mass COVID-19 Vaccination Campaigns contributed to a jump in the number of adults who had received at least one vaccine dose from 14 percent on November 8, 2021 to 69 percent by April 1, 2022. The U.S. government is committed to building on this success by supporting the Government of Uganda in further increasing the total number of fully vaccinated people in the country.

In the **Philippines**, since January 2022, Peace Corps staff has worked with the Philippines Department of Health and other Filipino Government partners to administer COVID-19 vaccinations and increase demand for COVID-19 vaccines. Approximately 13,500 Filipinos, including children aged 5 to 11 in pediatric vaccine clinics in Luzon and the Visayas, have been vaccinated through this effort.

In **Liberia**, Peace Corps worked closely with four different County Health Teams to coordinate vigorous vaccination campaigns, with the largest and most successful vaccination campaign held in West Point, where Peace Corps contributed to the vaccination of nearly 4,000 individuals, or 10 percent of the West Point township.

**USAID** has supported UNICEF’s delivery of more than 800 ultra-cold chain freezers to enable the safe storage and management of the Pfizer vaccines in 70 countries. USAID Missions have helped with facilitating rapid customs clearance, advocating with host governments for proactive planning of installation sites and site readiness preparedness, and coordinating with UNICEF country offices on any issues they encounter in the process.

USAID has worked with UNICEF, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and the White House COVID-19 Response Team to closely coordinate the procurement and supply of specialized auto-disable safety syringes to prevent the spread of other viruses that can come from syringe reuse.

**CDC** is supporting the evaluation of COVID-19 vaccine effectiveness by variant, vaccine target group, and product in more than a dozen countries and through regional networks across four World Health Organization regions. These collaborations have led to the first real-world vaccine effectiveness estimates for global vaccine products and helped inform global vaccine policy.