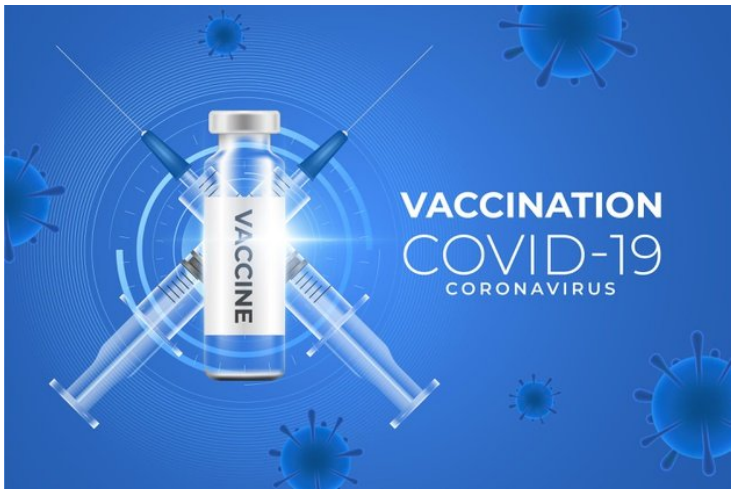
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ASIA EDITION

COVAX announces new agreement, plans for initial doses of vaccine deliveries

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Signs an advance purchase agreement for up to 40 million doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine; rollout to commence with successful execution of supply agreements



COVAX, the global initiative to ensure rapid and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines for all countries, regardless of income level, has announced the signing of an advance purchase agreement with Pfizer for up to 40 million doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine candidate, which has already received WHO emergency use listing. Rollout will commence with the successful negotiation and execution of supply agreements.

In further support of its mission to expedite early availability of vaccines to lower-income countries and help bring a rapid end to the acute stage of the COVID-19 pandemic, COVAX also confirmed that it will exercise an option –via an existing agreement with Serum Institute of India (SII) – to receive its first 100 million doses of the AstraZeneca/Oxford University-developed vaccine manufactured by SII.

Of these first 100 million doses, the majority are earmarked for delivery in the first quarter of the year, pending WHO Emergency Use Listing. The WHO review process, which is currently underway, follows approval for restricted use in emergency situations by the Drugs Controller General of India earlier this month, and is a critical aspect of ensuring that any vaccine procured through COVAX is fully quality assured for international use. According to the latest WHO update, a decision on this vaccine candidate is anticipated by the middle of February.

COVAX also anticipates that, via an existing agreement with AstraZeneca, at least 50 million further doses of the AstraZeneca/Oxford vaccine will be available for delivery to COVAX participants in Q1 2021, pending emergency use listing by WHO of the COVAX-specific manufacturing network for these doses. A decision on this candidate is also anticipated by WHO in February.

Preparations, led by WHO, UNICEF and Gavi, are already well under way for COVAX to deliver vaccines to economies eligible for support via the COVAX AMC, with Gavi making $ 150 million available from its core funding as initial, catalytic support for preparedness and delivery.

Building on the work of the past months supporting country readiness efforts, a “Country Readiness Portal” will be launched by WHO this month, which will allow AMC participants to submit final national deployment and vaccination plans (NDVPs). This is a vital step before allocations can be made, to ensure that delivered doses are able to be effectively deployed and to identify where, if necessary, further support is needed.

The COVAX Facility intends to provide all 190 participating economies with an indicative allocation of doses by the end of this month. This indicative allocation will provide interim guidance to participants – offering a minimum planning scenario to enable preparations for the final allocation of the number of doses each participant will receive in the first rounds of vaccine distribution.