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GDC
GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT CENTRE



**Coping with COVID: Experiences
of Developing Countries in
Vaccine Platforms and Rollout**

Wednesday, 19 May 2021
3:00 pm to 4:30 pm IST

 WEBINAR

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

- Globally, it has been realised that equitable distribution of vaccines remains the biggest challenge in least developed and developing countries. Though new technologies with regards to vaccine management have been introduced in most of the countries like needle free vaccine administration, cold chain independent vaccines, yet the developing countries are encountering impediments in expanding the reach of the vaccine programmes to its population. With time, countries are adopting information technology around supply chain management, population-based registries, personalized vaccination records, reminder systems, etc. to push the vaccination programmes into the digital age.
- With the help of decade long vaccination campaigns, small-pox eradication was possible and routine immunization programmes against measles, polio and diphtheria–tetanus–pertussis (DTP), poliomyelitis, rubella, mumps and Ebola, have prevented approximately millions of deaths in the recent years globally.
- In less than a generation, the African region has been tremendously successful in systematically implementing vaccination drives to the targeted populations. Increased access to immunization and successful roll-out of

vaccination has resulted in a drastic reduction in vaccine preventable diseases like polio, measles, tetanus, meningitis, to name a few.

- The unprecedented outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic has a huge geographic spread. The intensity of the infection is exposing increased number of cases everyday across the globe. Under such circumstances, there is an outgrowing need for having increased awareness, allocation of adequate resources for controlling pandemic. Proper preparedness and planning is needed to end this pandemic which has posed an immense threat to global health and economies. It is evident that increasing the availability of vaccines, for both platform and non-platform frameworks should be an overarching policy goal for least developed and developing countries.
- While the vaccination drive is on-going in many parts of the world, it is important to define what we expect from this process for dealing with the present challenges and future emerging viruses. The pace of vaccination drive is higher in developed countries compared to that of least developed and developing countries, which is again exposing the hard reality of asymmetrical distribution. African countries still need to provide COVID vaccine to majority of its population.
- It is also equally important to highlight that to prevent severe diseases after infection; vaccination would result in enhanced immunity and development of internal resistance to fight the virus. Therefore, large-scale global vaccination within the stipulated timeframe would induce long-lived immunity. To attain the above, production and distribution of large quantities of vaccines are immediately required in the least developed and developing countries.
- COVID-19 has accelerated the development of vaccine platforms distinct from delivery of other pre-existing vaccination programmes. If the novel classical mode of vaccination is continued, then it will also increase the response time when new viruses emerge in the future. In this context, it is ought to state that speed of effective vaccination is vital in slowing down the spread of the pandemic. Moreover, many of the existing novel modes have little pre-existing data on different aspects of health information of individuals. Digitization process would reduce data entry and compilation errors. In addition, digital data would help in micro-planning and assess the vaccine demand, generated by the targeted populations.

Objectives

- Given the growing digital divide, there is an urgent need for least developed countries to pool human and financial resources at the regional level to build their digital infrastructure and skills. As a call for equitable access, the Global Development Centre plans to carry forward the Indian Vaccine Platform Co-WIN's learning and experience in the partner countries of Africa by harping on the need for a robust digital platform which eventually evolves into a digital public good for effective vaccine management, monitoring and evaluation.
- With the aim to increase coverage and vaccinate populations across least developed and developing countries, the most effective and authentic tool is the use of digital technology for mass inoculation in fighting the pandemic. Digital tools used in Co-WIN are streamlining the processes ensuring both access to prompt vaccination opportunities and capture important health information of individuals.

Key Issues

Broadly, the session is envisaged to cover the following questions from various country experiences regarding vaccine platforms and rollout:

1. How can South-South Cooperation inspire developing countries to help each other in co-creating digital platforms needed for vaccine management?
2. What are the challenges faced in supply chain management and training for vaccine production & distribution?
3. How can developing countries overcome vaccination hesitancy?
4. What mechanism can be developed to share learning amongst developing countries, vis-à-vis handling of COVID-19?
5. How can South-South Cooperation help in rapid vaccination in developing countries?

Circulation of Outcome/Key Recommendations of Webinar

The key findings and recommendations of the webinar would be circulated to attendee Speakers from countries/institutions/relevant ministries and policy recommendations will be disseminated for appropriate implementation.