Ministry of Health
Vanuatu Government

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Vanuatu Situation Report #40 – 21 June 2021

HIGHLIGHTS

- So far, 44,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been received in Vanuatu, comprising 24,000 AstraZeneca doses through COVAX Facility and 20,000 Sinopharm doses received on 6 June 2021 from the Chinese Government.
- Vaccine roll-out started on 2 June 2021 with the first batch of AstraZeneca prioritised to health workers, front line workers (e.g. border workers, quarantine facility staff, public transport drivers), the elderly (55 and above), and people over 35 with existing medical conditions.
- Up until 20 June 2021, there were 7,462 doses administered. A total of 548 healthcare workers, 1,032 other frontline workers, 1,367 elderly persons and 994 persons with known underlying conditions received their first dose of AstraZeneca. No serious adverse events following immunization in Vanuatu have been confirmed to be vaccine-product related.
- Planning is ongoing by the Ministry of Health for launch and roll-out of the Sinopharm vaccine.
- Updates will be communicated via the COVID-19 website: www.covid19.gov.vu
- **Vanuatu remains in Scenario 1.** There are currently no COVID-19 cases in isolation or quarantine, with no evidence of local transmission in Vanuatu since the beginning of the pandemic.

Yellow highlights indicate where information has changed relative to the previous SitRep.

INITIAL STAGE OF VACCINATION PLANNING

Since late 2020, work has been ongoing by the Ministry of Health and partners to plan and prepare for the roll-out in Vanuatu of COVID-19 vaccines. The Vanuatu National COVID-19 Vaccine Deployment Plan (Version 1) was developed to support Vanuatu's application for accessing vaccines through the COVAX Facility. The COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility is a global procurement mechanism coordinated by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, WHO and UNICEF with the goal to ensure fair and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines for all countries.

An indemnity document was required to allow the import into Vanuatu of COVID-19 vaccines through the COVAX Facility; this was granted by Parliament on 22 April 2021 for vaccines that had received a WHO Emergency Use Listing (EUL). On the 19 May 2021, Vanuatu received the first batch of 24,000 doses of COVID-19 AstraZeneca Vaccines from the COVAX Facility. This should enable coverage of up to 20 per cent of the eligible population in the initial planned rollout, with the prioritised groups being health workers, front line workers (e.g. border workers, quarantine facility staff, public transport drivers), elderly (55 and above) and people over 35 with existing medical conditions.

On 6 June 2021, Vanuatu received 20,000 doses of the Sinopharm vaccine, which had earlier received a WHO EUL. This was provided through a bilateral agreement between the governments of Vanuatu and The People's Republic of China. Planning is ongoing by the Ministry of Health for launch and roll-out of the Sinopharm vaccine.

ADDITIONAL VACCINE SUPPLY

Currently there is greater global demand for COVID-19 vaccines than vaccine manufacturing companies can produce. The Vanuatu Ministry of Health are actively working to identify additional sources of vaccines, including through bi-lateral partners. The Ministry of Health will keep the public informed of further developments regarding additional vaccine supply and roll-out.

PRE-REGISTRATION

Pre-Registration for the COVID-19 Vaccine was held between 18 and 24 June 2021, during which over 4,000 people pre-registered. This was initiated to collect advance information to better understand vaccine acceptance levels in selected groups eligible for vaccination in Phase 1. Pre-registration efforts mainly targeted health workers and frontline workers, though other groups also pre-registered. The pre-registration process and information was used to optimize data systems, messaging and strategies for targeted groups.

Those who pre-registered will not necessarily be entitled to receive a vaccine first or earlier. Only those in specific defined groups will be entitled to access vaccines in the initial stage, in order of priority .Those who did not pre-register will still be able to access the vaccine when it is their turn, depending on which priority group they belong to.

VACCINATION ROLL-OUT

On 2 June 2021, Vanuatu launched its COVID-19 vaccine roll-out campaign during a high-level event. The total number of AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine doses administered between 2 June 2021 and 20 June 2021 was 7,462. These have been prioritised to health workers, front line workers (e.g. border workers, quarantine facility staff, public transport drivers), the elderly (55 and above), and people over 35 with existing medical conditions. For the 994 individuals who stated they had an underlying condition at the time of vaccination, these included asthma, cancer, diabetes, heart problems, high blood pressure, kidney disease and/or lung disease.

Table 1: Total number of people in priority and other groups vaccinated from 2 June 2021 to 20 June 2021.

Priority Group	Dose Number
Total number of doses received	**44,000**
AstraZeneca	24,000
Sinopharm	20,000
Total number of doses administered	**7,462**
Healthcare workers vaccinated with first dose*	548
Other frontline workers vaccinated with first dose*	1,032
Elderly (55 and above) vaccinated with first dose*	1,367
Persons with known underlying conditions vaccinated with first dose*	994

Note: These categories are not mutually exclusive; individuals may be counted within more than one category

To date, there have been no reports of serious adverse events following COVID-19 immunization in Vanuatu that have been confirmed to be vaccine-product related.

CURRENT TRANSMISSION SCENARIO

Since the beginning of the pandemic, there have been three (3) active COVID-19 cases in Vanuatu, all of which have been detected in quarantine. There has been no community transmission of COVID-19 in Vanuatu. From over 23,000 tests conducted in Australia and New Zealand on people arriving from Vanuatu between early 2020 and March/April 2021, none have detected COVID-19.

- From 1 January 2020 to 21 March 2021, 1,149 people who travelled from Vanuatu undertook approximately 2,298 tests for SARS-CoV-2 during quarantine in New Zealand. No test results were positive.
- From February 2020 to April 2021, 10,512 people who travelled from Vanuatu undertook approximately 21,024 tests for SARS-CoV-2 during quarantine in Australia. No test results were positive.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Everyone is urged to refer only to official information sources and to avoid spreading misinformation and rumours. Further information and updates are made available by the Ministry of Health on the dedicated website at www.covid19.gov.vu and the free landing page at https://bit.ly/vanmoh or by calling the Health Information Hotline on 119.

Approved by: Mr Len Tarivonda, Director of Public Health
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** The frequency of Ministry of Health COVID-19 Situation Reports will depend on the evolving situation.*