**UNICEF to lead procurement and supply of COVID-19 vaccines in world’s largest and fastest ever operation of its kind**

*UNICEF will work with manufacturers and partners on the procurement of vaccine doses as well as freight, logistics and storage of COVID-19 vaccines, on behalf of global COVAX Facility*

**NEW YORK/COPENHAGEN, 9 September 2020** – UNICEF is leading efforts to procure and supply COVID-19 vaccines in what could possibly be the world’s largest and fastest ever procurement and supply of vaccines, as part of the global vaccine plan of the [[COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility (COVAX Facility)](https://www.gavi.org/covid19/covax-facility)](https://www.gavi.org/covid19/covax-facility) led by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.

With several vaccine candidates showing promise, UNICEF, in collaboration with the [PAHO Revolving Fund](https://www.paho.org/en/resources/paho-revolving-fund), will lead efforts to procure and supply doses of COVID-19 vaccines on behalf of the COVAX Facility for 92 low- and lower middle-income countries whose vaccine purchases will be supported by the mechanism through the [Gavi COVAX AMC](https://www.gavi.org/news/media-room/92-low-middle-income-economies-eligible-access-covid-19-vaccines-gavi-covax-amc). In addition, UNICEF will also serve as procurement coordinator to support procurement by [80 higher-income economies](https://www.gavi.org/news/media-room/172-countries-multiple-candidate-vaccines-engaged-covid-19-vaccine-global-access), which have expressed their intent to participate in the COVAX Facility and would finance the vaccines from their own public finance budgets.

UNICEF will undertake these efforts in close collaboration with WHO, Gavi, CEPI, PAHO, World Bank, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and other partners. The COVAX Facility is open to all countries to ensure that no country is left without access to a future COVID-19 vaccine.

“This is an all-hands on deck partnership between governments, manufacturers and multilateral partners to continue the high-stakes fight against the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Henrietta Fore, UNICEF Executive Director. “In our collective pursuit of a vaccine, UNICEF is leveraging its unique strengths in vaccine supply to make sure that all countries have safe, fast and equitable access to the initial doses when they are available.”

UNICEF is the largest single vaccine buyer in the world, procuring more than [2 billion doses of vaccines](https://www.unicef.org/supply/stories/scaling-vaccine-procurement) annually for [routine immunization](https://www.unicef.org/immunization) and outbreak response on behalf of nearly 100 countries. It is the main procurement partner of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, which over the last 20 years has reached [more than 760 million children with life-saving vaccines,](https://www.gavi.org/our-alliance/about) preventing more than 13 million deaths. UNICEF will use its market shaping and procurement expertise to coordinate the procurement and supply of COVID-19 vaccines for the COVAX Facility.

In response to an expression of interest that UNICEF issued in June on behalf of the COVAX Facility, 28 manufacturers with production facilities in 10 countries shared their annual production plans for COVID-19 vaccines through 2023. According to the timelines the manufacturers indicated, the span from development to production could be one of the fastest scientific and manufacturing leaps in history.

A UNICEF market assessment, developed by compiling information submitted by vaccine manufacturers along with publicly available data, revealed that manufacturers are willing to collectively produce unprecedented quantities of vaccines over the coming 1-2 years. However, manufacturers signaled that investments to support such large-scale production of doses would be highly dependent on, among other things, whether clinical trials are successful, advance purchase agreements are put in place, funding is confirmed, and regulatory and registration pathways are streamlined.

Currently under development by WHO, the COVAX allocation framework will guide how and where UNICEF, PAHO and other procurers working on behalf of participating countries supply COVID-19 vaccines that are secured by the Facility. Initial dose allocations are expected to be scaled to enable countries to vaccinate health and social workers, followed by subsequent tranches of vaccine doses that would enable participating countries to vaccinate populations at higher risk of critical COVID-19 disease.

UNICEF, Gavi, WHO, and PAHO have started critical preparatory work for country vaccine readiness in collaboration with partners and national governments including:

* Working with device manufacturers to plan availability of safe injection equipment and cold chain requirements for the vaccine;
* Developing guidance with WHO and trainings to support vaccination policies and appropriate handling, store and distribution of the vaccines;
* Working with manufacturers on freight and logistics solutions to get vaccine doses to countries as quickly and safely as possible once they are allocated;
* Supporting countries in planning for vaccine delivery, including targeting those most at risk and transport and storage at point of service delivery;
* Ramping up efforts with civil society and other local partners to ensure that people are well-informed about the COVID-19 vaccination process and putting measures in place to enhance trust and tackle misinformation about COVID-19 vaccines.