

CONCEPT NOTE

Overview

Since the advent of COVID-19 in late 2019, with no magic pill for treatment available, vaccines against the scourge have been developed and approved globally with unprecedented haste. And yet, COVID-19 has the world on its knees, with no signs of waning. Instead, 18 months on, countries globally are experiencing third and fourth waves due to mutations making the pathogen more transmissible and resistant to earlier developed vaccines.

The disease alone is not the only ravaging factor. Terms such as vaccine-nationalism, -hesitancy and -apartheid have become commonplace. This is aside from the other factors that make access to vaccines extremely difficult such as very limited production capacity globally, supply and cold chain hurdles, health infrastructure and human resource for safe and effective delivery of the vaccines.

All these factors are magnified for Africa with its varied under developed and developing nations. Yet Africa is determined to see 60% of its population (~800 million people) vaccinated by 2023; a mammoth task in achieving herd immunity so as to have a fighting chance against the disease. Currently, 2.55% of the population have had the first dose of any COVID-19 vaccine, while only 1.09% has had two doses [<https://africacdc.org/covid-19-vaccination/>].

There are a few initiatives that the continent has turned to for improved access to vaccines, including:

1. COVAX co-led by CEPI, Gavi and WHO, alongside key delivery partner UNICEF. In the Americas, the PAHO Revolving Fund is the recognized procurement agent for COVAX. The coverage through this drive is far from desirable.
2. The AU Africa Vaccine Acquisition Task Team (AVATT) through multinational corporation partnerships
3. Bilateral enterprise

Some of the key obstacles experienced in 2021 in accessing vaccines globally have been:

- Retention by manufacturing countries for their own populations being ravaged by lethal variants
- Back-orders due to production limitations
- Recalls due to contamination on production
- Variant specificity

About the Session:

The purpose of this summit is for the private sector in Africa, based on their strengths in relevant areas of the supply chain, with the backdrop of the all the obstacles preventing access and the preferred public-private partnership model, to deliberate upon and formulate initiatives that will exponentially drive Africa's access to COVID-19 vaccines.

Participants of the summit will:

- ✓ get a situational analysis from key players in the vaccine arena
- ✓ learn of opportunities from the discussions that ensue and
- ✓ be able to position themselves within the initiatives that are identified in the culmination of the summit