



A VIRTUAL ROUNDTABLE SERIES: **SHARING SOLUTIONS AND LESSONS FOR EQUITABLE COVID-19 VACCINATION**

Convened by:

Access and Delivery Partnership (ADP) coordinated by UNDP and the Health Intervention and Technology Assessment Program (HITAP), Ministry of Public Health, Thailand

Dates:

Roundtable 1: 24 August 2021 (16:00-17:30hrs/Bangkok)
Roundtable 2: 7 September 2021 (16:00-17:30hrs/Bangkok)

The COVID-19 pandemic, officially declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) in March 2020, remains a worldwide health and development crisis. Although the global effort to develop multiple safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines has been successful, many low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) still do not have access to sufficient supplies of the vaccines. This has translated into inequitable and uneven access to COVID-19 vaccines across countries. As of the end of July 2021, over 4 billion doses of the COVID-19 vaccines have been administered but only 1.1% of people in low-income countries have received a dose. This vaccine inequity and the emergence of highly contagious virus variants threaten to prolong the pandemic, and further deepen the health and development impacts.

The challenge of ensuring adequate global vaccine supply and access is taking the center stage in numerous global public health fora – but equal focus is needed on efforts at the national levels to ensure country readiness for vaccine roll-out. In the current context of uncertain and limited global vaccine supply, it is crucial that national vaccination programmes are prepared and able to deliver vaccines to their populations as swiftly, and as equitably, as possible.

Over a hundred LMICs have developed National Deployment and Vaccination Plans (NDVP) for the COVID-19 vaccines. In line with WHO-UNICEF guidance, NDVPs aim to specify the processes and resources that are required for the deployment, implementation and monitoring of COVID-19 vaccines. NDVPs will need to consider country-specific factors, including high risk and marginalized groups for prioritization within populations, and the means to reach them. The vaccines will also need to be safely stored and rapidly distributed.

COVID-19 vaccination programmes are likely the largest public health intervention at the national level, with many attendant logistical challenges. National planning and coordination processes should point out gaps in readiness and capacity, which can become bottlenecks in successful vaccine deployment. Despite the limited supplies of vaccines, nearly all LMICs have begun their COVID-19 vaccination programmes. The roll-out processes have demonstrated that various factors can influence the effectiveness of the programmes. Health system preparedness, including supply chain logistics and infrastructure, digitized information systems for distribution and beneficiary management, and medical facility and staff readiness, are some of these factors. The need for a range of additional interventions – including those to

address vaccine hesitancy, monitor and manage adverse events following immunization (AEFI) and provide proof of vaccination – have also emerged as additional challenges. They highlight the role for robust monitoring and evaluation systems that are flexible and adaptable to an evolving situation.

As such, information on success factors of effective and equitable COVID-19 vaccination at the national level can be instrumental for the scale-up of national vaccination programmes, in readiness for when greater supplies of vaccines are available. Sharing of insights and country experiences will provide valuable lessons for overcoming bottlenecks and complications; and in turn enable successful deployment and continued uptake of COVID-19 vaccines.

Virtual roundtable series

A series of two Roundtables will be convened by the Access and Delivery Partnership (ADP) led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Health Intervention and Technology Assessment Program (HITAP), Ministry of Public Health, Thailand. The roundtables aim to foster exchanges between policy makers and technical experts on the enabling or success factors of effective and equitable COVID-19 vaccination at the national level. Sharing of country experiences can provide valuable lessons for overcoming bottlenecks and complications, and in turn promote a better understanding of the common elements of successful deployment and continued uptake of COVID-19 vaccines.

Roundtable 1 will focus on the pre-requisites for the effective roll-out and deployment of COVID-19 vaccines, with a focus on:

- Governance, planning and delivery of vaccines
- Ensuring vaccine safety and quality
- Promoting equitable access to vaccines

Roundtable 2 will have a focus on factors that can sustain and support effective vaccination programmes:

- Behavioral and economic interventions for increased vaccine uptake
- Monitoring and evaluation of vaccination programmes
- Vaccine certificates

Participants

Participants will be drawn from policy makers and technical experts in LMICs, including from the national task forces or committees on COVID-19 vaccination, as well as agencies responsible for public health, vaccine regulation, immunization programmes, technology assessment and procurement. Other stakeholders, such as research and academic experts, Members of Parliaments and representatives from multilateral development partners will also be invited. Approximately 30 participants are expected for each Roundtable.

Format

Participation in the Roundtables will be by invitation. The discussions will be conducted virtually, through the Zoom audio and video conferencing platform. The Roundtables will be conducted under the Chatham House Rule, to encourage open dialogue. As such, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed. Note, however, that the organizers plan to publish summaries of the Roundtable discussions, without attributions, to enable sharing of lessons learned with the global health community.

VIRTUAL ROUNDTABLE SERIES:
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Roundtable 1:
Challenges and lessons in the national roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines
24 August 2021 (16:00-17:30hrs/Bangkok)

AGENDA

Time	Topic
10 mins	Opening remarks by the Moderator: Håkan Björkman, Regional Health and Development Advisor and Team Leader Health and Development Group, Asia and the Pacific, UNDP Introductions
10 mins	Welcome/context setting remarks by the Chair: Dr. Somsak Chunharas, President, National Health Foundation, Thailand
30 mins	What are the pre-requisites for the effective roll-out and deployment of COVID-19 vaccines? Invited speakers will make 5 min interventions, highlighting country experiences and insights on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Governance, planning and delivery of vaccines Ir. Montty Girianna, Deputy for Coordination of State-Owned Enterprises Business Development, Research and Innovation, Coordinating Ministry of Economic Affairs and Indonesia National COVID-19 Committee ○ Ensuring vaccine safety and quality Delese Mimi Darko, Chief Executive Officer, Ghana Food and Drugs Authority ○ Promoting equitable access Prof. Gagandeep Kang, The Wellcome Trust Research Laboratory, Christian Medical College, Vellore, India
35 mins	Roundtable discussion, facilitated by the Moderator
5 mins	Concluding remarks by the Chair Wrap-up and close by the Moderator

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Roundtable 2:
Sustaining effective COVID-19 vaccination programmes
 7 September 2021 (16:00-17:30hrs/Bangkok)

AGENDA

Time	Topic
10 mins	Welcome/Opening remarks by the Moderator: Srinivas Tata, Director, Social Development Division, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)
10 mins	Welcome remarks by the Chair: Precious Matsoso, Director, Health Regulatory Science Platform, University of the Witwatersrand
40 mins	<p>What are factors to enable effective and equitable vaccination programmes? A panel of speakers will discuss the factors that will impact on the success and effectiveness of vaccination programmes, with a focus on sharing country experiences on issues related to vaccine hesitancy, monitoring and evaluation of vaccination programmes, and vaccination certification.</p> <p>Panel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dr Mandeep Dhaliwal, Director, HIV, Health and Development Group, UNDP ○ Dr. Ann Lindstrand, Director, Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI), WHO [TBC] ○ Dr. Raymond Sarmiento, Director, National Telehealth Center, National Institutes of Health, University of the Philippines Manila, Philippines ○ Mr Vikas Sheel, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Health, India ○ Dr Yuji Yamada, Brookdale Department of Geriatrics and Palliative Medicine, The Mount Sinai Hospital, US
25 mins	Roundtable discussion, facilitated by the Moderator
5 mins	Concluding remarks by Chair Wrap-up and close by the Moderator