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COVID-19 Vaccines safe: Inaugural webinar on COVID Vaccine Strategies assures Africa

“Take the COVID-19 Vaccines, they are safe and will not harm you!” This was the resounding call during today’s inaugural session on COVID-19 vaccine strategies in Africa.

The African Union’s Economic Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) Secretariat, ECOSOCC in collaboration with the African Development Bank and the Africa CDC, has embarked on a continental COVID-19 Vaccination Sensitization campaign aimed at ensuring that the wider African public has access to verified information on the COVID-19 vaccine from authoritative sources in the African public health community.

Given the transmissibility of the virus combined with its capacity to mutate into different and more resistant strains, public health experts agree that vaccination remains the only realistic path to finally halting the spread of the virus.

Opening the webinar series, ECOSOCC Acting Presiding Officer, Mr. Denise Kodhe said the various vaccines that recently underwent clinical and regulatory tests, proven to be safe and effective by the world’s leading drug regulatory authorities had renewed Africa’s hopes of ending the pandemic and getting back to normal.

He commended the African Union for safeguarding lives in Africa through Africa CDC by procuring 1.27 billion doses of vaccines estimated to be enough to vaccinate about 60% of Africa’s population.

The webinar had a high level panel that included Dr. John Nkengasong, Africa CDC Director, Dr. Moumini Niaone, Executive Director, Pull For Progress and Dr. Serge Kodom, Founder-President, AIMES Afrique.

Dr. Nkengasong gave an overview of the COVID-19 situation in Africa, including the Africa CDC’s COVID 19 response and the current distribution of the vaccines.

He stated that over 105,000 people in Africa had died of COVID-19 since February 2020. He emphasized that for Africa to beat the pandemic, there was need for a multilateral approach in addition to getting vaccinated.

The panelists assured the continent that the COVID-19 vaccines are safe and should be taken without fear as they had gone through rigorous safety procedures and testing. Further, giving perspectives from the CSOs Dr. Niaone and Dr. Kodom, highlighted interventions their organisations were carrying out to halt the pandemic.

“A lot of us have had our doubts about the vaccine but it is through consultations, and tough discussions with the health professionals that we can get reassuring answers “ said ECOSOCC Secretariat Principal Coordinator, William Carew in his closing remarks. “I want to commend the Africa CDC on its leadership in acquiring a high quota of vaccines for Africa. “

The webinar series on COVID-19 Vaccines, an initiative of ECOSOCC, in collaboration with Africa CDC and AfDB will run through to June 2021, as the roll out of vaccines begins this month across Africa.

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About ECOSOCC

The Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) was established in July 2004 as an Advisory Organ composed of different social and professional groups of AU Member States. The mandate of ECOSOCC is to contribute, through advice, to the effective translation of the objectives, principles and policies of the African Union into concrete programmes, as well as the evaluation of these programmes.

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