

21 SEPTEMBER 2020

\$27million investment in global vaccine facility

Rt Hon Winston Peters

Deputy Prime Minister Foreign Affairs

The Coalition Government has committed to invest \$27 million in COVID-19 vaccine development through the global COVAX Facility, Foreign Minister Winston Peters announced today.

"The COVAX Facility is a key part of our COVID-19 Vaccine Strategy to obtain safe and effective vaccines. It allows us to invest in a high-quality, diversified portfolio of COVID-19 vaccine candidates. This will ensure we are spreading risk and keeping our options open," said Mr Peters.

"New Zealand expressed interest in joining the COVAX Facility in July, which allowed us to support international efforts to shape how the Facility works. We have officially confirmed our commitment to the COVAX Facility and will invest an initial \$27 million to support development and manufacturing. It will act as a pre-purchase, should any of the vaccine candidates be successful."

Mr Peters said additional funding will be required to purchase COVID-19 vaccines if any of the candidates in the COVAX Facility portfolio are successful, but the exact amount of additional funding is not yet known.

This initial investment of \$27 million is part of the allocation the Government announced in August from the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund.

"The agreement will ensure that New Zealand receives enough vaccines to cover up to 50 per cent of the population of New Zealand and the Realm, which includes Tokelau, Cook Islands and Niue" said Mr Peters.

"It's important that all countries are able to access sufficient amounts of vaccines to protect their populations and contribute to getting the pandemic under control on a global level.

"Joining the COVAX Facility is complementary to the other strands of the COVID-19 Vaccine Strategy, which includes advance purchase arrangements with pharmaceutical companies, investing in global research and increasing manufacturing capability," said Mr Peters.

ENDS

NOTE FOR EDITORS:

The COVAX Facility was recently launched by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, in partnership with the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) and the World Health Organisation (WHO). Gavi is a public-private partnership, including the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the World Bank and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. It vaccinates millions of children worldwide for a range of diseases.

The COVAX Facility is the vaccines pillar of the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator. The ACT Accelerator is a ground-breaking global collaboration to accelerate the development, production, and equitable access to COVID-19 tests, treatments, and vaccines. The COVAX Facility aims to accelerate the development and manufacture of COVID-19 vaccines, and to guarantee fair and equitable access for every country in the world.

More information about COVAX can be found on the Gavi website: <https://www.gavi.org/covid19/covax-facility>