

Vaccine inequity undermining global economic recovery

New Global Dashboard on COVID-19 Vaccine Equity finds low-income countries would add \$38 billion to their GDP forecast for 2021 if they had the same vaccination rate as high-income countries. Global economic recovery at risk if vaccines are not equitably manufactured, scaled up and distributed.

Geneva/New York City, 22 July 2021 – COVID-19 vaccine inequity will have a lasting and profound impact on socio-economic recovery in low- and lower-middle income countries without urgent action to boost supply and assure equitable access for every country, including through dose sharing, according to new data released today by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the University of Oxford.

An acceleration in scaling up manufacturing and sharing enough vaccine doses with low-income countries could have added \$38 billion to their GDP forecast for 2021 if they had similar vaccination rates as high income countries. At a time when richer countries have paid trillions in stimulus to prop up flagging economies, now is the moment to ensure vaccine doses are shared quickly, all barriers to increasing vaccine manufacturing are removed and financing support is secured so vaccines are distributed equitably and a truly global economic recovery can take place.

A high price per COVID-19 vaccine dose relative to other vaccines and delivery costs – including for the health workforce surge – could put a huge strain on fragile health systems and undermine routine immunization and essential health services and could cause alarming spikes in measles, pneumonia and diarrhea. There is also a clear risk in terms of foregone opportunities for the expansion of other immunization services, for example the safe and effective rollout of HPV vaccines. Lower income countries need timely access to sustainably priced vaccines and timely financial support.

These insights come from the Global Dashboard for COVID-19 Vaccine Equity, a joint initiative from UNDP, WHO and the University of Oxford's Blavatnik School of Government, which combines the latest information on COVID-19 vaccination with the most recent socio-economic data to illustrate why accelerating vaccine equity is not only critical to saving lives but also to driving a faster and fairer recovery from the pandemic with benefits for all.

“In some low- and middle-income countries, less than 1 per cent of the population is vaccinated – this is contributing to a two-track recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic”, **said UNDP Administrator, Achim Steiner**. “It’s time for swift, collective action – this new COVID-19 Vaccine Equity Dashboard will provide Governments, policymakers and international organizations with unique insights to accelerate the global delivery of vaccines and mitigate the devastating socio-economic impacts of the pandemic.”

According to the new Dashboard, which builds on data from multiple entities including the IMF, World Bank, UNICEF and Gavi, and analysis on per capita GDP growth rates from the World Economic Outlook, richer countries are projected to vaccinate quicker and recover economically quicker from COVID-19, while poorer countries haven't even been able to vaccinate their health workers and most at-risk population and may not achieve pre-COVID-

19 levels of growth until 2024. Meanwhile, Delta and other variants are driving some countries to reinstate strict public health social measures. This is further worsening the social, economic and health impact, especially for the most vulnerable and marginalized people. Vaccine inequity threatens all countries and risks reversing hard won progress on the Sustainable Development Goals.

“Vaccine inequity is the world’s biggest obstacle to ending this pandemic and recovering from COVID-19,” said **Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization**. “Economically, epidemiologically and morally, it is in all countries' best interest to use the latest available data to make lifesaving vaccines available to all.”

Designed to empower policy makers and development partners to take urgent action to reduce vaccine inequity, the Global Dashboard breaks down the impact of accessibility against a target for countries to vaccinate their at-risk populations first to reduce mortality and protect the health system and then move on to vaccinating larger shares of the population to reduce disease burden and re-open socio-economic activity.

The Dashboard is facilitated by the Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for All (SDG3 GAP), which aims to improve collaboration across the multilateral system to support an equitable and resilient recovery from the pandemic and drive progress towards the health-related SDGs.

“Closing the vaccine gap is required to put this pandemic behind us. The dashboard can help scale up and accelerate global delivery of vaccines by providing accurate, up-to-date information on not just how many vaccines have been given, but also the policies and mechanisms through which we get them into arms,” said **Dr. Thomas Hale, Associate Professor of Global Public Policy, Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford**.

The Dashboard will be updated in real-time as new data becomes available, filling a critical gap to help guide the international community's understanding of what can be done to achieve vaccine equity. Users are able and encouraged to download all data sets in full from the website.

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Notes to editors

<https://data.undp.org/vaccine-equity/>

ABOUT UNDP:

UNDP is the leading United Nations organization fighting to end the injustice of poverty, inequality, and climate change. Working with our broad network of experts and partners in 170 countries, we help nations to build integrated, lasting solutions for people and planet.

ABOUT WHO:

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The World Health Organization provides global leadership in public health within the United Nations system. Founded in 1948, WHO works with 194 Member States across six regions, to promote health, keep the world safe and serve the vulnerable. Our goal for 2019-2023 is to ensure that a billion more people have universal health coverage, to protect a billion more people from health emergencies, and provide a further billion people with better health and well-being.

For updates on COVID-19 and public health advice to protect yourself from coronavirus, visit www.who.int and follow WHO on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [TikTok](#), [Pinterest](#), [Snapchat](#), [YouTube](#), [Twitch](#)

ABOUT THE BLAVATNIK SCHOOL, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD:

The Blavatnik School of Government at the University of Oxford exists to inspire and support better government and public policy around the world. Its Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker, launched in early 2020, systematically tracks and compares policy measures that governments around the world have taken to tackle COVID-19. www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/covidtracker.