

23 February 2022

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Personal details removed for proactive release

I refer to your email of 25 January 2022 in which you request the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA):

*Please provide details of NZ's participation in the COVAX program and contributions to vaccine equity for developing countries.*

Aotearoa New Zealand is committed to supporting widespread vaccination against COVID-19 globally. It is vital that all countries have the tools to protect their communities and recover from the pandemic. We also know that variants of concern are most likely to emerge in populations with very low immunisation rates. For these reasons, equitable access to vaccines is critical to global recovery.

## **COVAX**

In July 2020, New Zealand joined the COVAX Facility, a global initiative led by Gavi (the Vaccine Alliance), the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), and the World Health Organisation (WHO), which aims to provide equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines for all.

To date, New Zealand has contributed NZ\$26 million in Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding to the COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC) to support access to COVID-19 vaccines for developing countries. Of this, NZ\$9 million is tagged to increasing immunisation rates in countries where vaccine uptake is still very low. More information on this additional funding can be found here: <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/new-zealand-provides-additional-funding-covax-vaccine-delivery>.

New Zealand has to date donated 9.7 million COVID-19 vaccine doses to the COVAX AMC for distribution to developing countries, including in the Pacific. Close to 1 million doses have been delivered to Indonesia, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor Leste, Tonga and Tuvalu to date. These donations were "fully-funded" and therefore New Zealand also provided NZ\$6.7 million in funding to cover the cost of safe injection equipment and other ancillary costs. The latest announcement on our COVAX dose donations can be found here: <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/new-zealand-donates-further-covid-19-vaccines-covax-and-pacific-islands>

New Zealand is also a self-financing participant in the COVAX Facility. Our COVAX Commitment Agreement gives us the option to purchase COVID-19 vaccine doses for up to 50 percent of the population of New Zealand, Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau. New Zealand has purchased (and used) 100,620 Pfizer vaccine doses through this arrangement. Another 1.668 million COVAX-sourced AstraZeneca doses allocated to New Zealand were donated to the COVAX AMC (as above).

For more information on COVAX, please visit the Gavi website here:

<https://www.gavi.org/covax-facility>.

### **Other contributions to equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines**

New Zealand has committed to providing full support for the vaccine access and roll-out in Polynesia, and the Government is working with other donors to ensure the Pacific region is supported to meet their vaccination needs. In addition to COVAX donations, our support includes:

- Doses of the Pfizer vaccine and supported vaccine rollout in the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau. All three countries have completed vaccination of their populations aged 16 years and over, and have rolled out doses to 12-15 year-olds (completed in Cook Islands and Niue, and in progress in Tokelau). We are also providing Pfizer vaccines for 12-14 year-olds in Fiji, and 12-17 year-olds in Samoa and Tonga.
- New Zealand is providing paediatric vaccine doses to Cook Islands and Niue, and booster doses to Samoa and Tonga. Discussions are ongoing with all six Polynesian countries to ensure they have access to paediatric and booster vaccines to implement their desired immunisation programmes.
- At Fiji's request, New Zealand provided grant funding to Fiji to purchase 100,000 doses of AstraZeneca vaccine on-sold from Spain in August 2021.
- New Zealand has partnered with Australia and UNICEF to help procure further vaccines for Pacific countries, contributing NZ\$6.5 million towards these efforts. We have also contributed an additional NZ\$10 million to UNICEF to support roll-out of COVID-19 immunisation programmes in the Pacific and Indonesia.

New Zealand's funding to COVAX makes up a portion of our \$58 million contribution to the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator. Also under the ACT Accelerator initiative, New Zealand has contributed NZ\$15 million to CEPI to support investment in global COVID-19 vaccine development and production scale-up.

New Zealand uses our engagement in international institutions to promote vaccine equity. In response to constraints on global vaccine supply, New Zealand has actively advocated in APEC and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) for trade facilitation and the removal of export restrictions on COVID-19 vaccines. New Zealand is supportive of the proposal in the WTO for a waiver of intellectual property protections in relation to COVID-19 vaccines, more information on New Zealand's support for improving global access can be found here:

<https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/nz-backs-moves-improve-global-access-covid-vaccines>.

Please note that we may publish this letter (with your personal details redacted) on the Ministry's website.

If you have any questions about this decision, you can contact us by email at:  
[DM-ESD@mfat.govt.nz](mailto:DM-ESD@mfat.govt.nz).

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision by contacting [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Nāku noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Julie-Anne Lee', is displayed within a light blue rectangular border.

Julie-Anne Lee  
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade