



COVID-19 VACCINATION: ACCELERATE EFFORTS TO ACCESS VACCINES WITH SUPERIOR EFFICACY

The Bureau of Public Safety commends the President, H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, and the COVID-19 management team for working hard to obtain the COVAX facility to mitigate the impact of the coronavirus in our country, i.e. secure citizens' health, restore the economy, and social life to a certain normal. Nonetheless, the Bureau is concerned about some teething/critical issues outstanding that Government, the driver of the immunization program, must consider as a matter of urgency to assure public confidence and ensure we achieve population /herd immunity within the shortest possible time. The Bureau requests the Government to strongly consider the following:

1. Government should accelerate efforts to secure/procure vaccines with higher proven efficacy, (in addition to the AstraZeneca vaccine), against the predominant strains in Ghana (i.e.Wuhan or wildtype, UK and South African variants). Considering reports from South Africa, Germany, Austria, and other European countries the Bureau would like to urge Government to apply equal haste as with the COVAX facility to access these relatively more efficacious vaccines for the general population to achieve the herd effect and restore the economy and social life to a certain normal.
2. To include, as part of its vaccination program, a broad system of continuous surveillance to monitor and evaluate persons who have received the AstraZeneca vaccine. The Bureau is informed by issues such as appropriateness for use by some demographic population groups and relatively low efficacy (75-76%) against primary symptomatic COVID-19 in the first 3 months after vaccination and the fact that some developed countries including South Africa have rejected the AstraZeneca vaccines. This should ensure that the country fully remains in the known on matters arising to enable swift response to adverse developments.

There is no doubt that the COVAX vaccine's regime dosing provide the country an opportunity to vaccinate a large proportion of the population with a single dose, (then a second dose given after 3 months), might be an effective strategy for reducing the disease; nonetheless outstanding issues listed above if not appropriately factored has the potential to negatively impact on our collective efforts in the fight against the pandemic.

Authorized for immediate release

1st March, 2021