

Africa's COVID job rate must 'increase six times': WHO

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Satellite imagery of Africa. Credit: Public Domain

Africa must boost the vaccination rate against COVID-19 "six times" to

reach the target of 70 percent vaccine coverage set for the end of the first half of 2022, the World Health Organization (WHO) said Thursday.

Africa has received "more than 587 million [vaccine doses](#)" but it "is still struggling to expand rollout, with only 11 percent of the population fully vaccinated", explained the WHO regional office for Africa.

"The world has finally heard our calls. Africa is now accessing the vaccines it has demanded for far too long. This is a dose of hope for this year," said Matshidiso Moeti, WHO Regional Director for Africa.

"However, a dependable pipeline must go hand in hand with operational funding to move doses out of depots and into people's arms."

In some countries, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, the vaccination campaign is stalling and large quantities of doses may expire in the coming weeks.

"Richer countries must not only ensure they are donating vaccine doses that have adequate shelf lives but also contribute funding for in-country operational costs," said Mohamed Malick Fall, regional director of UNICEF for Eastern and Southern Africa.

Data reported to the WHO by 40 countries reveals a funding gap of \$1.29 billion for operational costs, the international organization said.

Since the start of the pandemic, Africa has recorded 10.8 million cases of COVID-19 and more than 239,000 deaths, according to the WHO.

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