

# New \$1.2 bn plan to boost African vaccine production launched

June 20 2024

---



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

A new \$1.2 billion program to massively boost vaccine production in Africa was launched on Thursday, aiming to give the continent more sovereignty to fight numerous diseases including a cholera resurgence.

The announcement made at a Paris summit aimed in part to begin to address the huge gap in access to vaccines between wealthy and poorer countries seen during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Gavi vaccine alliance, which facilitates the distribution of doses to poorer countries, also announced at the summit that it is seeking \$9 billion to fund its programs from 2026-2030.

French President Emmanuel Macron told the summit that the new African Vaccine Manufacturing Accelerator (AVMA) "will be an essential step towards a genuine African vaccine market."

Three quarters of its funding will come from Europe, Macron told the summit, which was also attended by leaders from Botswana, Rwanda, Senegal, Ghana.

Germany will contribute \$318 million to the scheme, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said in a video message.

France put in \$100 million and the UK \$60 million, while other donors include the United States, Canada, Norway, Japan and the Gates Foundation.

The new program "could become a catalyst for promoting the pharmaceutical industry in Africa and fostering collaboration between member states", African Union commission Moussa Faki Mahamat told the summit.

Africa imports "99 percent of its vaccines at an exorbitant cost", he added. The African Union has set the goal of the continent producing 60 percent of its own vaccines by 2040.

## **Cholera jabs**

The COVID-19 pandemic shone a light on global vaccine inequity, as wealthy countries home to big pharma firms snapped up most doses, leaving Africa far behind.

Switzerland, for example, destroyed more COVID vaccine doses than it ever administered.

"When the next pandemic hits, even if our leaders in the rich Western countries are angels, the pressure to hold on to your own vaccines, for your own people, is always going to be irresistible," British Foreign Secretary David Cameron told the summit.

Many parts of Africa have recently seen deadly outbreaks of cholera, which has highlighted the need for more local vaccine producers. Only one firm in the world—South Korea's EuBiologics—makes the cheap and effective oral vaccine doses for the deadly disease.

Macron called for cholera to be "consigned to the past", adding that outbreaks were now affecting "half of Africa".

He announced 10 billion euros towards a production chain for cholera vaccines to be launched in Africa by the South African biopharmaceutical firm Biovac, supported by the new vaccine accelerator.

Thanks to the new money, "we are sure that within two years, Africa will be producing the cholera vaccine," said Jean Kaseya, head of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention.

The scheme will also build stockpiles of vaccines for cholera, yellow fever, ebola and other diseases to avoid future shortages.

Building the ability to manufacturer more vaccine doses is also hoped to

help African nations not be left out if new pathogens that pose a pandemic threat emerge.

## **\$9 billion sought**

The Gavi vaccine alliance, which helps distribute jabs for more than 20 different diseases to poorer countries, also began its funding drive at Thursday's Global Forum for Vaccine Sovereignty and Innovation.

It has already raised \$2.4 billion towards its \$9 billion five-year goal, Gavi CEO Sania Nishtar said.

More than half of that amount came from the US, which chipped in \$1.58 billion, first lady Jill Biden said in a video message.

Gavi chair Jose Manuel Barroso said that "one million children vaccinated since 2000 is an incredible achievement".

"A child born today has a better chance of celebrating his or her fifth birthday than ever before in history," he said.

© 2024 AFP

Citation: New \$1.2 bn plan to boost African vaccine production launched (2024, June 20) retrieved 23 June 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2024-06-billion-pledged-african-vaccine.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.