

UPDATE TO THE NATION ON THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK IN THE COUNTRY

Date: 2nd December 2022

Fellow Countrymen, Countrywomen and Residents in Uganda,

Of late, I have been talking to you about Ebola but today I want to talk to you about the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) which many of you have forgotten. You will recall that it's coming to three years since the world got the first Coronavirus case in China in Wuhan City in December 2019. This disease then spread to the entire world.

In Uganda, our first case was confirmed by our health workers on 21st March, 2020. This was a traveler who had visited Dubai and was returning home. Since then, the outbreak spread affecting the entire country and we have had three waves. The first wave was caused by the Wuhan virus mainly spread by truck drivers from March 2020 to April 2021 (**41,907** cases and **341** deaths). The second wave was caused by the Delta variant and lasted from 30th April 2021 to 7th December 2021 (**65,419** cases and **2,920** deaths), while the third wave was caused by the Omicron variant which began in 8th December 2021 to date 2022 (**63,368** cases and **371** deaths). However, transmission of the Omicron variant is still ongoing.

Despite the severe effects of the Coronavirus, we averted the worst-case scenario that had been predicted for Africa. This was because of our proactiveness and cooperation of the population. I want to thank Ugandans for adhering to my 36 directives that I instituted to save lives.

The directives and the restrictions were necessary to give us time to delay rapid spread of the disease as we prepared the health system and waited for vaccines. Today, we have adequate vaccine stocks, oxygen plants, Intensive Care Units, and CT Scans in all the National and Regional Referral Hospitals, plus a robust laboratory network covering the entire country and more knowledgeable health workers and scientists. We are in control of the outbreak.

To-date, there are a total of **170,694** confirmed cases of COVID-19 and **3,632** deaths. Since September 2022, we have been recording an average of 50 cases per week. The low numbers have been sustained for the past 3 months with no hospitalization and minimum deaths. This is because some of you have been following the Standard Operating Procedures that we put in place and getting vaccinated against COVID-19.

I have been informed by the Ministry of Health that so far we have received a total of 48,897,520 doses of COVID-19 vaccines in the country through donations and procurement by Government. Of these, 26,281,566 doses have been administered to the population and 22,615,954 doses are still in National Medical Stores. To-date, 59% of the population 18 years and above have received at least 2 doses of the vaccine while only 6% of the children aged 12-17 years have received 2 doses of the vaccine. This coverage is below our target of 28.5 million eligible Ugandans (22 million adults and 6.5 million children) who are up to date with their vaccination against COVID-19.

Below is a breakdown of the original priority groups and their vaccination status

Target Population	Received 1 st Dose	Fully Vaccinated
Health workers (150,000)	184.9% 277,421	106.1% 159,812
Teachers (550,000)	105.0% 577,719	61.0% 335,276
Elderly 50 years and above (3,348,500)	89.6% 2,999,101	44.6% 1,492,015
Uniformed Personnel (250,000)	64.6% 161,492	29.4% 73,479

I continue to appeal to all of you to get vaccinated because the Coronavirus Disease is still with us. I have been told by Ministry of Health that the positivity rate continues to vary between 0.4% to 1.2%. Although, in the Western World and some parts of Asia, the Coronavirus has started to increase again and even cause death, Africa has been relatively spared with low positivity rates.

The National Task Force reviewed the current COVID-19 situation in the country and made the following recommendations to avoid a resurgence and flare up of infections. These **should** be adopted for implementation with immediate effect;

1. A certificate of vaccination with evidence of up-to-date boosting is a requirement for entry into formal meetings and public places.
2. Where there is no up to date vaccination certificate, a negative PCR test within 24 hours is required.

3. COVID-19 vaccination certificate will be required to access offices at all Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies. Similarly, a COVID-19 vaccination certificate will be required to visit all public and private offices.
4. Use of masks is recommended for all individuals in enclosed places and , public gatherings.
5. The elderly 50 years and above, and those living with comorbidities are encouraged to get vaccinated and boosted at least every 6 months
6. Individuals with symptoms of Coronavirus should not go to closed or crowded places
7. Handshaking and hugging remain prohibited
8. All eligible Ugandans should get vaccinated and boosted at least every 6 months

I direct the Ministry of Health to re-launch the vaccination exercise and ensure more people are vaccinated especially the elderly, those with comorbidities and children aged 12-17years.

Let us work together to ensure the Coronavirus does not flare up again.

I thank you.

For God and My Country.

Gen. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni (Rtd)

2nd December, 2022