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COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery Partnership boosts Sierra Leone COVID-19 Vaccination with USD2.8 million worth donation.

- **COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery Partnership, (CoVDP) has handed over vehicles, motorbikes and computers worth of \$2.8M to support Sierra Leone Vaccination efforts.**
- **The additional support is aimed at enabling country further to scale up COVID-19 vaccination, as well as strengthen broader routine immunization services across the country.**
- **The support comes at a time when Sierra Leone and health partners are working to strengthen the health care delivery system and improve child health care services.**

Freetown, 25 January 2023 - The COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery Partnership, (CoVDP), have today handed over vehicles including motorbikes and computers worth over USD\$2.8 million to support Government of Sierra Leone's COVID-19 vaccine deployment. CoVDP is a joint venture of the Global Alliance for Vaccine Initiative (Gavi), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

The items were officially handed over to Dr Austin Demby, Minister of Health and Sanitation in Freetown and they included two pick up vehicles, 250 motorbikes, six computers and accessories and 300 tablets with power banks. In addition, 15 Peripheral Health Units (PHUs), and four District Vaccine Stores, will be connected to solar powered systems.

These supplies are part of the technical and operational support which the country is receiving to help scale up COVID-19 vaccination and strengthen routine immunization services across Sierra Leone.

"It is heart-warming to receive these items from the COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery Partnership, (CoVDP). Since COVID-19 Vaccination is a vital lifesaving tool in the fight against COVID-19, this move is a step in the right direction. As Sierra Leone has achieved over 70% of fully vaccinated individuals for COVID-19 vaccination, this donation will boost the country's determination in making more gains in the integrated vaccination approach," said Dr Austin Demby, Minister of Health and Sanitation.

Since March 2021, when Sierra Leone first introduced COVID-19 vaccination, the partners have helped ensure the delivery of up to 7,881,848 doses of COVID-19 vaccines to the country through COVAX and other sources. Since the initial rollout, vaccination of eligible members of the population has significantly improved. This latest support from the COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery Partnership will ensure that the country's COVID-19 vaccination programme continues this positive trajectory, continuing to reach high-risk population groups with boosters and remaining alert to the continued global threat of COVID-19.

“Gavi is proud to work with our partners in continued support of Sierra Leone’s COVID-19 vaccination rollout,” said Dr. Richard Mihigo, Director of COVID-19 Vaccine Delivery, Coordination and Integration at Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.

“These additional resources are vital investments that will further strengthening the health system as a whole, supporting integration of COVID-19 vaccines into routine immunization programs, and ensuring more children are protected against various vaccine-preventable diseases.”

These vehicles and equipment have come at a time when partners in Sierra Leone continue to support the Government to strengthen the health care delivery system and improve child health care services including immunisation, which faced a temporary snag due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“In collaboration with the Government of Sierra Leone, we will intensify efforts on the deployment of vaccines, strengthening of the cold chain system, community sensitization and engagement for increased uptake of immunization services”, said Dr. Suleiman Braimoh, UNICEF Representative in Sierra Leone. This will help ensure that the COVID-19 vaccination is integrated into routine immunization services in 2023 and beyond to protect children from vaccine preventable illnesses such as polio and measles.”

“The protracted nature of the COVID-19 pandemic calls for continued collaboration and partnership to support the ongoing efforts and progress that Sierra Leone has made in the fight against the disease”, says Dr Innocent Nuwagira, WHO Representative in Sierra Leone. “While we recognize the progress, WHO encourages everyone to remain vigilant, maintain the structures that were instituted to curb the pandemic, get more people vaccinated and continue to administer booster doses in accordance with national guidelines to safeguard the gains that we have collectively made”.

in addition to the items donated today, another consignment including two vehicles, one refrigerated van and 150 solar refrigerators, is expected to arrive in Sierra Leone by March 2023 for handover to the Ministry of Health and Sanitation.

###Ends

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