



**GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SANITATION
4TH FLOOR, YOUYI BUILDING
BROOKFIELDS, FREETOWN**

PRESS RELEASE

Freetown Monday, 28th June, 2021

Unsubstantiated claims made about the Chinese-manufactured COVID-19 vaccine by two newspapers in Sierra Leone

The Ministry of Health and Sanitation read with dismay the spurious claims made by the Newstime Africa and the Standard Times newspapers on the 24th and 25th June respectively. The two reports published by the aforementioned newspapers made baseless claims relating to the recent unfortunate death of a healthcare worker, and without evidence or respect for the current ongoing investigation, linked the death to a Chinese-manufactured COVID-19 vaccine. The reports made further unsubstantiated and inflammatory comments around the efficacy of the Chinese vaccine.

The Ministry of Health and Sanitation takes exception to these claims as they are deceptive and highly irresponsible.

It can be recalled that in the press release, dated 24th June, the Ministry of Health and Sanitation made it abundantly clear that any medical event (including serious side-effects or death) following administration of any COVID-19 vaccine will be systematically investigated following national and international vaccination protocols. The goal of these investigations is to determine whether the vaccine caused the medical event, or not. It is highly inappropriate and irresponsible for national news agencies to publicly speculate on cause of death before investigations have been concluded by competent authorities.

The Ministry of Health and Sanitation of 24th June, 2021 also stated that available data shows that the COVID-19 vaccines being rolled-out in Sierra Leone are safe and effective. Since the introduction of COVID-19 vaccines in Sierra Leone on March 15th, over 108,000 doses have been administered across the country, with no serious incident associated with the administration of the vaccines. With COVID-19 cases increasing every day during this third wave of the pandemic, vaccines remain one of our biggest hopes for saving lives in our country. Any attempt to undermine public confidence in these vital components in our efforts to contain this outbreak would only go to prolong the suffering of our people.



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We continue to be thankful to the Government and people of the Peoples Republic of China and all our development partners for coming to our aid with these critical life saving vaccines. Our current vaccine coverage is less than 2% of the population. We look forward to the continued assistance of our partners as we embark on increasing our vaccine coverage in the country.

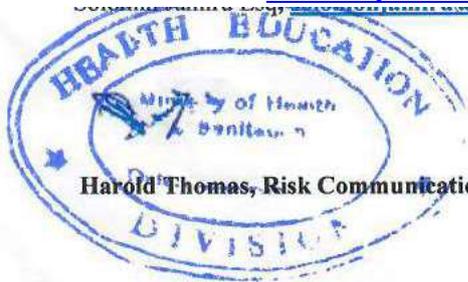
News agencies are urged to report responsibly, and members of the public to fact-check their sources and avoid spreading misinformation at this critical time in the fight against COVID-19.

For more information, please contact:

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