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PRESS RELEASE

Belize Receives First Set of COVID-19 Vaccines from the COVAX Facility

Belmopan. March 31, 2021. 4:00 p.m.

The Ministry of Health & Wellness announces the arrival of 33,600 doses of the Oxford-AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines to Belize.

The vaccines arrived today at 11:30 a.m. at the Philip Goldson International Airport. Hon. Michel Chebat, Minister of Health and Wellness, to receive the first shipment of vaccines from the COVAX Facility on behalf of the people and Government of Belize. The Minister was joined by H.E. Rossana Briceño, Special Envoy for the Development of Families and Children; Ambassador Amalia Mai, CEO in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade; Dr. Noreen Jack, PAHO/WHO Representative in Belize; Ms. Alison Parker, UNICEF Representative in Belize; and Mr. Nicolaus A. Hansmann, European Union Representative in Belize.

The COVAX Facility is the global alliance ensuring equitable access to vaccines to countries that may otherwise face challenges in getting COVID-19 vaccines. Belize is expected to receive a total of 238,800 doses through the COVAX facility in the first two quarters of the year. The delivery from the COVAX Facility was facilitated through the PAHO Revolving Fund.

During a short ceremony on the tarmac, Minister Chebat said, “We extend appreciation for the team effort coordinated through our partners, PAHO/WHO, UNICEF and IDB for negotiating, purchasing, and handling the shipment logistics on behalf of Belize and the other 36 countries participating in the COVAX Facility; this was our only hope for a long time to ensure that the people of Belize get vaccines and now we can celebrate the arrival today.”

"Seeing this arrival of the vaccines through COVAX Facility is very reassuring and it means that more people will be able to be protected from COVID-19," said Dr. Noreen Jack, PAHO/WHO Representative in Belize. "We will continue to work with the Ministry of Health & Wellness and the country to support vaccination along with the known public health and social measures that can help stop the spread of COVID-19, protect health services, and save lives."

Alison Parker, UNICEF Representative for Belize stated, "the arrival of the vaccines to Belize strengthens the national response to rebuilding our society and regaining a sense of normalcy. Children have been most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and are similarly the greatest beneficiaries when protection systems and structures can function, to offer support to families and communities."

The COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign continues as Belize now enters Phase 2. The Ministry extends an invitation to those from Phase 1 and Phase 2 to get vaccinated.

The Ministry reminds the public that even after receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, persons are to continue to follow the COVID-19 guidelines: wear masks properly in public, maintain physical distancing and wash and sanitize hands often. Please stay at home and call the Ministry's hotline at 0-800-664-2273 for more information.

Ends

"Be COVID-19 Safe! Get Vaccinated!"