



## **PAHO and Canada step up efforts to bring COVID-19 vaccines to populations in situations of vulnerability in Latin America and the Caribbean**

**Kingston, Jamaica, 13 January, 2023 (PAHO)** – The Government of Canada and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) today announced a renewed collaboration to increase access to COVID-19 vaccines for populations that have lagged behind in immunization efforts across Latin America and the Caribbean.

To this end, Canada will provide an additional C\$ 45 million (US\$ 33.4 million) to PAHO in support of COVID-19 response efforts. This financial support adds to a prior contribution of C\$ 50 million (close to US\$40 million) made in May 2021. Almost a third of the new funds will support national interventions in Colombia, Haiti and Jamaica.

The announcement was made at an event in Kingston as part of the launch of Canada's Global Initiative for Vaccine Equity (CanGIVE), which aims to support countries in vaccine delivery and distribution, including efforts to increase confidence in vaccination and boost the regional production of vaccines.

"The pandemic is not over. Last month, the Region of the Americas reported more than 3.6 million new COVID-19 cases and 18,000 new deaths, a surge of 42% and 28% of cases and deaths, respectively", **Ciro Ugarte**, Director of Health Emergencies at PAHO, said.

"I commend the Government of Canada for its continued support to PAHO and the countries in the region in facing the COVID-19 pandemic, building upon our joint efforts to achieve optimal health and contribute to the wellbeing of all the peoples of the Americas", **Ugarte** added.

While over 70% of the Region's inhabitants have completed a primary vaccination schedule to date, 203 million people have yet to receive a first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

"Although we may wish we could turn the page on COVID-19 altogether, we know it is not that simple. There is still work to do to control the spread of the virus, move into recovery, and build stronger health systems," the Minister of International Development of Canada, **Harjit Sajjan**, said at the event.

“Canada’s partnership with PAHO will help improve access to COVID-19 vaccines, especially for people in vulnerable situations, including women and girls. [It] will also help improve vaccine surveillance, and support health workers,” Minister Sajjan added.

With the additional funds, PAHO will support Member States in Latin America and the Caribbean in strengthening health systems and immunization programs, and in incorporating COVID-19 vaccination into regular vaccination schedules.

The collaboration will also support the implementation of information systems and digital platforms for COVID-19 vaccine surveillance, research initiatives to build evidence on COVID-19 vaccines perception and acceptance, and will encourage vaccination through targeted outreach and community engagement efforts.

With Canada’s support, since 2021 PAHO has provided guidance to health authorities in the development and rollout of COVID-19 vaccine campaigns, ensuring that populations in situations of vulnerability are adequately reflected and prioritized in 28 Member States.

PAHO and Canada have also supported 22 countries in strengthening their cold chain capacity to safely manage and distribute COVID-19 vaccines, a long-term investment that will improve regular immunization programs and strengthen health systems altogether.

## **Links**

COVID-19 vaccines - [COVID-19 Vaccines - PAHO/WHO | Pan American Health Organization](#)

COVID-19 pandemic in the Americas - [Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\) Pandemic - PAHO/WHO | Pan American Health Organization](#)

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