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Venue: Livingstone, Zambia

**Only 3 percent of Africa's population is fully vaccinated against COVID-19
ECOSOCC calls for more people to get vaccinated**



The African Union Economic Social and Cultural Council (AU-ECOSOCC) has urged the African populace to get vaccinated if herd immunity is to be achieved. Currently, only three percent of Africa's population is fully vaccinated against COVID-19!

ECOSOCC Head of Secretariat, William Carew said there has been a lot of misinformation about the COVID-19 vaccines that had contributed to many people being wary of getting vaccinated.

He said this during the Civil Society Organisation (CSOs) COVID-19 Vaccines Capacity Building and Sensitization Meeting, which is part of ECOSOCC's continental sensitization campaign aimed at promoting the accessibility and use of the COVID-19 vaccines in order to build herd immunity in Africa and thereby halt the spread of the pandemic and its adverse impact on the public health and socio-economic development in Africa.

The Livingstone meeting is in collaboration with the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Southern Africa Regional Coordinating Centre (SA-RCC), Zambia's Ministry of Health and the Zambia National Public Health Institute (ZNPPI).

Mr. Carew emphasised that public health experts agree that vaccination remains the only realistic path to finally halting the spread of the virus given its ease of transmissibility and ability to mutate.

"I want to urge you all to take this opportunity as CSOs to get the right information about the vaccines and help us to educate the communities that you operate in," he said.

Opening the meeting, ZNPPI Director General, Prof. Victor Mukonka, representing the Ministry of Health, urged the general populace to ignore the false information and stories circulating and to take the COVID-19 vaccines being offered, because they are safe.

Prof Mukonka said the vaccines are safe and the fear associated with them are unfounded, emphasizing that, "living in fear will not help matters, get vaccinated."

Dr. Lul Riek, Regional Coordinator, Africa CDC (SA-RCC) informed the meeting that currently Africa has only 3% of its population fully vaccinated against COVID-19. He said in order to achieve herd immunity and make significant strides in the fight against COVID-19, 60-70% percent of the population would need to be vaccinated.

"Currently, 8 million people in Africa are infected with COVID-19. For Africa to beat the pandemic, there is need for a multilateral approach in addition to getting vaccinated," said Dr. Riek.

Other speakers and presenters who supported the meeting included Ministry of Health Directors, Dr. Abel Kalabo and Dr. Kalangwa Kalangwa, ZNPPI Director of Communications and Research, Ms. Mazyanga Liwewe and Ms. Viviane Sakanga African Medical and Research Foundation (AMREF) Head of Country Program.

About ECOSOCC

The Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) was established in July 2004 as an Advisory Organ composed of different social and professional groups of AU Member States. The mandate of ECOSOCC is to contribute, through advice, to the effective translation of the objectives, principles and policies of the African Union into concrete programmes, as well as the evaluation of these programmes.

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For media inquiries, please contact:

Ms. Carol Jilombo | Senior Communications Officer | AU ECOSOCC Secretariat, Lusaka, Zambia

E-mail: Jilomboc@africa-union.org

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