



MEDIA RELEASE:

Vaccine sharing commitment welcome, but greater effort needed on global hunger

The *End COVID For All* campaign warmly welcomes the Commonwealth commitment to share 10,000 Australian made COVID-19 vaccine doses each week with our neighbours in the Pacific and East-Timor.

End COVID For All will now ramp up its campaign for an additional pledge to the COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC), the globally coordinated effort to vaccinate the world's most vulnerable populations. COVAX AMC aims to secure 1.8 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines for 92 lower-income countries by the end of the year but is currently facing a \$2bn USD funding gap, of which Australia's share is \$200m.

The campaign also called on the Commonwealth to continue assessing whether it can contribute more to help COVID-ravaged hotspots of the world with a famine package.

"As developing countries continue to battle deadly COVID outbreaks, it is crucial we support them" *End COVID For All* spokesman Reverend Tim Costello said. "The stark reality is that this pandemic doesn't end for anyone until it ends for everyone.

"As Asia becomes the region with the highest number of COVID cases, Australia remains vulnerable to risks of new outbreaks and new variants which are more infectious, more deadly and more resistant to vaccines and treatments.

"It is vitally important to not only help our poorest neighbours but to protect Australia from further outbreaks. This can be achieved by sharing vaccines and strengthening health systems in the Asia-Pacific.

"However, the Federal Government could and should do more to address the world's largest hunger crisis in decades, including looming famine in a handful of countries across Africa and the Middle East.

"At the end of last year, the United Nations estimated 270 million people were at high risk of, or already facing, acute levels of hunger. This represents an 82 per cent increase on pre-COVID levels.

"133,000 people suffered famine in South Sudan, Yemen and Burkina Faso - the worst form of hunger, meaning starvation and extreme suffering on a mass scale. And more than 30 million people, predominantly in Africa and the Middle East, are now just one step away from famine due to COVID and conflict."

"With the pandemic far from over, acute hunger is guaranteed to worsen, and it is our moral responsibility to help those less fortunate than ourselves.

"In the Australian spirit of mateship and a fair go, the Federal Government should provide an immediate \$150m famine prevention package to the world's conflict and hunger hotspots such as South Sudan, Yemen, Afghanistan, Syria, and DR Congo. The Government should immediately join G7 leaders, like the United Kingdom and United States, which last week committed to act via a new Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Crises Compact."

"Failing to help hundreds of millions of people who are starving is an affront to Australian values."

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