



PRESIDENCY OF THE
**COUNCIL OF
MINISTERS**

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Office of the
Spokesperson

Press Release

Extraordinary Meeting of the Council of Ministers of February 15th, 2021

The Council of Ministers met, at the Government Palace ,in Dili, and approved the Government Resolution draft on the **national vaccination plan against COVID-19**, presented by the Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Social Solidarity and Inclusion, Armanda Berta dos Santos and the Interministerial Commission for the Preparation and Coordination of the Implementation of the Vaccination Plan against COVID-19. The presentation was also attended by Arvind Mathur, head of the World Health Organization (WHO) in Timor-Leste.

The national vaccination plan against COVID-19 now approved provides, according to the WHO recommendation, that the vaccine most appropriate for the context of Timor-Leste is the "AstraZeneca" vaccine, given that WHO considers this to be a safe and effective vaccine, and that the necessary storage and cooling conditions, between the 2o and 8oC, already exist in the country and are similar to those used in other national vaccination programs.

Timor-Leste has joined the "COVAX Facility" mechanism and will have free access to the COVID-19 vaccine for 20% of its population. The acquisition and implementation of vaccines for the remaining 80% of the population are still in the process of governmental discussion, together with the main development partners, in terms of resource mobilization, acquisition and provision of services. The first tranche of vaccines is expected to be made available to the country at the beginning of the second quarter of 2021.

This vaccination plan has as principles the universality, gratuity, accessibility and equity. Vaccination is not mandatory, although its administration is strongly recommended and encouraged. The vaccine will be administered phased to priority groups until the eligible population is fully vaccinated, and the criteria for access to vaccination are equitable within the same need/benefit group of the vaccine.





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In the first phase, 8% of the population is expected to be vaccinated, of which 3% correspond to frontline workers, including employees working in Quarantine and Isolation Units, or at the Entry Stations (airport, port and land border). The remaining 5% of this first phase covers the population residing in the area near the land border and people with, at least, one of the pathologies considered of risk.

In the second phase, which will cover 12% of the population, will be included citizens over 60 years of age, especially those residing in the Special Administrative Region of Oé-Cusse Ambeno (RAEOA), in Dili, in Covalima or in Bobonaro. Also covered in this phase will be health professionals, teachers, catering, shops and markets personnel, religious confessions staff and community and political leaders, who are residents of the RAEOA or in the municipalities of Dili, Covalima or Bobonaro.

The groups that make up the third phase, referring to the remaining 80% of the population residing in Timor-Leste, will be defined according to the evolution of clinical trials and the pace of supply of vaccines.

Vaccination will be carried out in the establishments of the National Health Service, where properly trained vaccination teams will be ascertained taking into account the specifications of vaccines against COVID-19.

The Government Resolution draft, which imposes a **health fence in the municipalities of Bobonaro and Covalima**, was also approved, taking into account the recent cases diagnosed with SARS-CoV-2, namely the cases found from illegal entries in the country, in order to safeguard the public health of the population and prevent the occurrence of community transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in national territory. With this Government Resolution draft, travel between these municipalities and other municipalities is prohibited. This Government Resolution takes effect on the day following its publication and ends on March 3rd, 2021, at 11:59 p.m. **END**

