

## **Vaccinating as many as possible the only way out of the pandemic – PM**

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The only hope for the world to end the Covid-19 pandemic is to ensure as many people are inoculated as rapidly as possible. Hence Malaysia reiterates its call for universal access to these vaccines.

Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin said vaccine equity is still a major issue and the world cannot win this war against the virus unless everyone has equal and rapid access to vaccines.

“These vaccines must be affordable and accessible to all. We joined the Covax facility to facilitate the equitable distribution of Covid-19 vaccines globally and commend the World Health Organisation (WHO) for spearheading this effort.

“I am delighted to note that Malaysia has started receiving the vaccines procured through Covax,” Muhyiddin said in his address during the closing session of the 74th World Health Assembly held virtually in Geneva, Switzerland, last night.

The government continues to provide free health screening and treatment for Covid-19 infections, and free vaccination to everyone in the country, regardless of their citizenship or immigration status.

“The roll out of vaccinations offers hope for us to win the war on Covid-19. It has already, evidently, done so much good in wealthy countries which have abundant access to vaccines. But we need all countries to have the same opportunity.

“Imagine the benefit to all of humanity if only more vaccines were immediately made available to people in need across the globe. We welcome the call for a people’s vaccine, and the Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights or Trips waiver, to allow vaccine manufacturing in the developing world,” he added

The prime minister said that Malaysia has successfully inoculated over five percent of its population under Malaysia’s National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme since late February, adding the pace is very much dependent on the supply and delivery of vaccines from the manufacturers.

He said Malaysia requires 53 million doses of vaccines to meet the needs of 70 percent of its population and to date, the country has only received just under 3.2 million doses or six percent of the required doses.

“With the expected arrivals of more vaccines in the next couple of months, we hope to increase our daily vaccination rate from 100,000 to between 200,000 and 300,000 per day, so Malaysia can achieve herd immunity against Covid-19 before the end of this year,” he said.

Muhyiddin also said Malaysia is scaling up vaccinations through public and private health partnerships, besides implementing many good practices observed in the other countries.

They include the citizen engagement and outreach of countries like Bhutan, drive-through vaccinations as in Arizona, United States, and to the use of mega vaccination sites from now under-utilised convention centres and stadiums in Thailand and many countries in the region.

Muhyiddin said Malaysia is committed to working closely with WHO and other countries in strategic partnerships, as guided by the General Programme of Work 13 to achieve Universal Health Coverage, address health emergencies and promote healthier populations, in line with the 2030 Agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals.

He said while the end to the Covid-19 pandemic might still be some time away, it is hoped that the global situation will continue to improve.

“This is a fight we cannot afford to lose. You can certainly count on Malaysia being a strong partner to WHO to create a healthier, happier and more equitable world for all,” he stressed.

Muhyiddin also said Malaysia applauded WHO for designating 2021 as the International Year of Health and Care Workers and was humbled by their abundant sacrifices.

“We are in awe of their courage and fortitude in the fight against Covid-19. We owe the healthcare frontliners of the world a debt of gratitude, including in Malaysia. You have saved countless lives and the futures of generations,” he added

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