

21st Annual General Meeting: Vaccines for a healthy future



The Developing Countries' Vaccine Manufacturers Network (DCVMN) held its 21st Annual General Meeting from 3rd to 5th November 2020, the first being held on a virtual platform, due to the pandemic declared on by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 11th March 2020¹⁰. The discussions focused on vaccines against SARS-CoV-2 virus to prevent the COVID-19 disease. Over 380 participants from 36 countries, including leaders from industry, research institutions and global health organizations, joined the online deliberations and agreed on the importance of vaccine developers and manufacturers in rapidly bringing to the world safe and effective vaccines to end the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic is expanding rapidly which makes the global availability and equitable access to safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines critical. Strategies put in place include the establishment of the ACT-A within which the COVAX facility aims to distribute 2 billion COVID-19 vaccine doses by the end of 2021 with procurement mechanisms established. At the same time, regulatory authorities have emergency use authorizations aimed at

the rapid approval of safe and effective vaccines, and harmonization in regulatory approaches being advocated.

Vaccine industry has moved with unprecedented speed thanks to thousands of volunteers in many countries who participated in clinical studies. In total there were more than 200 candidate vaccines reported, and about ten have reached phase 3 trials, including two mRNA candidates by Pfizer/BioNTech, and Moderna. Another technology was developed by Oxford University and AstraZeneca, in collaboration with emerging manufacturers in Argentina, Brazil, China, Korea, India, and Mexico. Other candidates include inactivated virus vaccines from Sinovac Biotech, in collaboration with Butantan, two vaccines from Sinopharm and one from Bharat Biotech which is in phase 3 trials in India. CanSino Biologics is well advanced with its vaccine development as is Novavax and Johnson & Johnson, in collaboration with Biological E. A vaccine produced in Russia was also advancing.

¹⁰ <https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19---11-march-2020>