

Stakeholders in public health sector in Africa are recognizing the need to bolster their efforts by scaling-up their interventions with innovative solutions to achieve the last mile delivery.

The latest evidence is how the power of collaboration and the power of leadership across the continent has been very valuable in various vaccination and immunization rollout campaign.

Speaking on the sidelines of the annual [International Conference on Public Health in Africa \(CPHIA\)](#) currently taking place in Lusaka, Zambia, Prof. Margaret Gyapong, Director of the Institute of Health Research and Co-chair of CPHIA 2023 stressed that the coordination and joint collaboration in the implementation of health interventions across different parts on the continent played key roles in coordination.

“With these joint efforts, we know that we will be able to reach the last mile,” she told a press briefing in the Zambian capital city, Lusaka.

Estimates by [CDC-Africa](#) show that the continental manufacturing capacity for vaccines is relatively at an early stage of development.

Reports by the World Health Organization (WHO) show that there are fewer than [10 African manufacturers with vaccine production](#) and are based in five countries: Egypt, Morocco, Senegal, South Africa and Tunisia.

The major concerns, according to experts is that there is very limited upstream production with most local companies only engaging in packaging and labelling, and occasionally fill and finish steps.

According to the UN agency, this presents enormous challenges when trying to establish sustainable vaccine industries in Africa which would ideally require advance purchasing support from African governments.

In May this year, the [African Union Commission \(AUC\)](#) and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance (Gavi), signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to increase access and accelerate the uptake of life-saving vaccines across African Union member states towards supporting immunization, providing technical and learning assistance and health systems strengthening.

One of the major areas of these interventions aims especially at building

sustainable regional manufacturing in Africa and boosting demand for routine vaccines.

The latest report by [Tony Blair Institute for Global change](#) indicates that the African continent is home to more than 1 billion people where health systems are often fragile, and disease is prevalent.

Researchers argue that the lack of manufacturing capacity in addition to limited investments means the continent can produce less than 1 per cent of its vaccine needs, with the situation set to become even more acute in the future as populations grow.

According to a similar study jointly supported by the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) and the [United Nations Industrial Development Organization \(UNIDO\)](#), the cost of building a manufacturing facility at between \$60 million and \$130 million. More recently, [Biovac](#), a South African-based bio-pharmaceutical company has estimated that a facility capable of producing up to 1 billion doses would cost between \$200 million and \$336 million

Currently Governments are seeking to accelerate an already established [Partnerships for African Vaccine Manufacturing \(PAVM\)](#) to steer a bold goal that is set to enable the African vaccine manufacturing industry to develop, produce, and sustainably increase supply, from less than 1 per cent.

As part of joint efforts to detect and respond quickly and effectively to various disease threats across the continent, CDC Africa emphasizes the need to enhance dialogue and promote cooperation between countries by engaging key stakeholders such as members of the community to implement a coordinated public health response across sectors.

Zambian Minister of Health, Sylvia Masebo pointed out significant efforts have been put towards strengthening health systems in Africa, despite challenges.

With current acceptance rates estimated at 75% to 80%, Dr Masebo explained that her Government and stakeholders continue to engage traditional leaders and religious institutions to foster community support for vaccinations.

AU Member States have committed to implement at least 90% of [Public Health Emergency Operations Centres \(PHEOCs\)](#) by 2026. These interventions include

building vaccination capacity, building laboratory and diagnostic system capacity, building infection prevention and control capacity, financial investment in infrastructure and health system capacity, among others.

The annual International Conference on Public Health in Africa (CPHIA) held in Lusaka, Zambia under the theme 'Breaking Barriers: Repositioning Africa in the Global Health Architecture' is expected to feature nine plenary sessions, 14 parallel sessions, nine abstract-driven sessions, a high-level ministerial session, and opening and closing ceremonies, according to the organisers.