

## INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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### **President Museveni commits to increase COVID-19 Vaccine uptake in Africa**



On the margins of the Third (3<sup>rd</sup>) Africa Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) Youth Symposium, the President of Uganda, H.E. Yoweri Museveni pledged support to the African Union (AU) COVID-19 Vaccination Bingwa initiative which aims to accelerate the number of vaccinations to 70% across the African continent by the end of 2022.

In his remarks, President Museveni stated: “Africa has an opportunity to reach a good percentage of vaccinated citizens against COVID-19. This

initiative is a great step and the Ugandan Government pledges support to integrate and accelerate the message of this campaign”

The AU COVID-19 Vaccination Bingwa initiative is an African Union public-private-youth initiative co-led by Africa CDC and the Women, Gender and Youth Directorate and partners. The initiative seeks to establish a network of COVID-19 vaccination youth champions across the continent to accelerate the uptake of coronavirus vaccination in Africa.

A key component of the initiative is to create a network of youth champions (Bingwa) across Africa and make a direct attributable contribution to getting at least 100 million Africans including 70 million youth vaccinated, and an indirect contribution to bridging the 760 million vaccination gap in Africa by increasing demand for coronavirus vaccinations.

The Acting Director of the Women, Gender and Youth Directorate of the AUC, Ms. Prudence Ngwenya, underscored that this step by the Ugandan President will serve as a great encouragement for other heads of state to pledge their support to the campaign.

“The message of vaccination requires a collective effort to drive change across Africa. To successfully fight the COVID-19 pandemic, we need to get into a mobilization phase of getting over 70 percent of the African population vaccinated”. MS Ngwenya noted in her speech.

To kick start the campaign, the AU with the support of partners, GIZ, Trace and our Bingwa champion, Mr. Daniel Obal who doubles as the Senior Presidential Aide in Charge of Youth Affairs in Uganda, hosted the first-ever Bingwa Night, as a platform to create awareness on the relevance of vaccinating and spark the conversation of increasing vaccinations using youth as mobilizers.

“When the COVID-19 pandemic emerged, it called for scientists across the world to find a vaccine solution very quickly. Initially there were concerns on vaccine equity as well as vaccine hoarding but now that has shifted – vaccines are available so we need to ensure we are protecting our communities through engaging with initiatives such as the AU COVID-19 Vaccination Bingwa Initiative” Mr. Obal said in his welcome remarks.

Grammy Award Winning Kenyan artist Ben Soul, South Sudanese artist Manasseh, Ugandan artistes Levixone, Ykee Benda, Crysto Panda, Radio host and influencer Lynda Ddane performed at the Bingwa night campaign launch.

“Using creative arts, AU Bingwa initiative hopes to change negative opinions about COVID-19 vaccines, instill the need to vaccinate against COVID-19 and mobilize popular support for vaccinations in Africa”. He said at the campaign launch”, Ibraheem Sanusi, Head of Project, Strengthening Crisis and Pandemic Response in Africa at the GIZ office to the AU.

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