



Solidarity Fund continues its efforts to increase vaccine uptake and awareness in final phase of its campaign

“The potential of the vaccines to save lives, and therefore livelihoods, makes access a human rights issue. We must work together to get many more people vaccinated so that we can mitigate the loss of lives and serious disease in future waves of the virus. We can also get back to living.”

Ms Wendy Tlou

Executive Head: Humanitarian Response and Behaviour Change Pillars, Solidarity Fund

Johannesburg, 28 March 2022: As South Africa commemorates Human Rights Month, the Solidarity Fund is continuing its efforts to get more people vaccinated against COVID-19 through the final phase of its vaccine demand acceleration campaign.

“The potential of the vaccines to save lives, and therefore livelihoods, makes access a human rights issue and we are therefore launching the final phase of our campaign in March,” says Ms Wendy Tlou, Executive Head: Humanitarian Response and Behaviour Change Pillars, Solidarity Fund.

“A key focus in this final phase is to encourage younger people to take up the opportunity to be vaccinated. Although vaccines have been rolled out to those over the age of 18 since last year, we have not seen enough young people taking up this opportunity. To date only five million of the country’s 17.7 million people between the ages of 18 and 34 – have been fully vaccinated. Since we have seen more young people being infected with the virus in previous waves, the slow pace of vaccine uptake is very concerning. There is now a need to target them to encourage them to get vaccinated. The Solidarity Fund will be working in partnership with the National Department of Health (NDoH) to amplify the recent #KeReady campaign that is specifically aimed at driving younger people to get vaccinated.”

“The Solidarity Fund’s latest campaign, which runs for eight weeks from 21 March 2022, will focus on extending targeted community mobilisation, door-to-door information provision and activations in the districts where vaccine uptake has been low. This will include five major metros as well as 10 other key districts.”

Community radio and social media platforms will be used to amplify the campaign and importantly respond to concerns, fears and questions about the vaccine, disseminate educational information and indicate where surge and mass sites and vaccines are available.

Increasing the uptake of vaccinations is particularly important because, although rates of infections are decreasing, a fifth wave is predicted for later in the year. Higher rates of vaccinations will prevent serious illness and death should people contract the virus. It will also enable the economy to stay open which will ensure that livelihoods are safeguarded and the country's economic recovery can be strengthened.

Through a range of interventions by the Solidarity Fund and government, more South Africans have taken up the opportunity to be vaccinated against COVID-19. To date, more than 17 million people have been fully vaccinated, accounting for almost 30% of the country's population. Just over 33 million vaccines have been administered since the rollout began last year. Efforts need to continue to ensure more people are vaccinated as quickly as possible.

"Having been closely engaged with supporting government in the process of bringing life saving vaccines to the population, the Solidarity Fund has equally been learning lessons so that we can make our efforts more effective, and innovative. This will be required as we attempt to reach people in areas where vaccine uptake has been low, especially as we implement this final phase," continues Tlou.

"Around the world, higher rates of vaccination have been shown to be effective in opening up economies, enabling ease of movement and getting back to living. The Solidarity Fund has been, and is driven, by this vision and has worked with a range of community organisations, media, influencers and other stakeholders over the last few months to encourage the uptake of vaccines against the virus. We are calling on all people, particularly the youth who have not yet been vaccinated to do so as soon as possible, particularly because scientists and medical professionals are predicting that a fifth wave could be upon us in the next few months."

"After two years of existence, the Solidarity Fund, in its current form, will be closing at the end of September 2022. We urge citizens who have not been vaccinated to please join this campaign so that we can together save many more lives, prevent severe illness and get back to living," concludes Tlou.

Join the conversation at:



<https://www.instagram.com/solidarityfundrsa/>



<https://twitter.com/SolidarityRSA>



<https://www.facebook.com/solidarityfundrsa>



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/solidarity-fund/?originalSubdomain=za>

#RollUpYourSleevesSA

NDoH Contact Centre number

The NDoH contact centres are able to assist with vaccination, registration and booking support, COVID-19 health related queries as well as post vaccination medical care enquiries.

The contact centre is available on: 0800-029-999.

The sites are open from 07h00 to 20h00, Monday to Friday and 08h00 to 18h00 on weekends and public holidays.

For people wanting information outside of these hours you can visit the SA Coronavirus website or use the WhatsApp Support Line: 0600-123456.