



MAURITIUS LAUNCHES ITS COVID-19 VACCINATION PROGRAMME

Port Louis, 26 January 2021 – Mauritius launches its Covid-19 vaccination programme today giving priority to frontliners including health care professionals, employees of the tourism industry as well as senior citizens and those with underlying medical conditions. 50,000 front liners are being considered for the vaccination campaign with 50% of them being in the tourism sector. Government objective remains the restart of the tourism sector in the safest conditions possible.

Mauritius observes strictest Covid-19 protocols and is regarded as having one of the world's best responses to the pandemic. Strict quarantine measures and thorough testing protocols have been in place since the outbreak with the hotel industry playing a key role in offering accommodation for confinements. The country received a perfect 100 on the Oxford University Stringency Index which tracks government policy and action regarding the Covid-19 pandemic.

There has been little to no disruption of social life in Mauritius since June 2020 with practically no known cases of community transmission. As a result, the country has seen an increase in demand from visitors looking to relocate to a Covid-safe environment for work, leisure, or retirement. The Premium Visa has been introduced for this purpose and allows for extended visits of 12 months with an option for further extensions.

Entry restrictions and quarantine requirements are expected to be eased progressively based on the evolution of the pandemic and upon visitors having achieved immunity. The situation is being closely monitored with vaccination campaigns already started in Mauritius's main tourism markets. It is expected that soon vaccinated visitors will be granted free access to the country.

The ultimate objective of the vaccination campaign is to inoculate 60% of the country's population of 1.3 million to achieve herd immunity. The first batch of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, produced by the Serum Institute of India, arrived from Mumbai on Friday 22 January as a donation from the government of India. Doses required to complete the vaccination campaign are expected from Oxford-AstraZeneca and Pfizer with an initial consignment approved through the COVAX facility.

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