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**People's Vaccine Alliance Africa  
Civil Society Meeting  
November 30, 2021**

Hosted by the [African Alliance](#)

## Meeting Objectives

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As Coordinators of the People's Vaccine Alliance in Africa, the African Alliance seeks to create a space where civil society representatives from around the continent can:

- receive updates on the PVA's global efforts,
- contribute to the PVA's activities and strategies,
- amplify African voices within the PVA,
- share information with each other on activities, challenges, and successes,
- develop advocacy strategies and activities together, and
- work towards improving communication and coordination related to African vaccine access and equity efforts.

## Participants (12 individuals, representing 11 organizations)

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### African Organizations

- African Alliance (2 participants)
- Health Justice Initiative (1 participant)
- Human Resources and Social Information Center in South Africa (1 participant)
- Gender Links (1 participant)
- People's Vaccine Campaign South Africa (1 participant)

### International Organizations

- Christian Aid (1 participant)
- Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP) (1 participant)
- Action Aid (Kenya) (1 participant)

### Other

- Community Activist (South Africa) (1 participant)
- London School of Economics (1 participant)
- King Edward Hospital (South Africa) (1 participant)

## Meeting Agenda & Key Points

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### Agenda Item 1: Updates on Omicron Variant [SEE TRANSCRIPT 10:59]

Maaza Seyoum (African Alliance) asks Marlise Richter ([Health Justice Initiative](#)) to update the group on what happening on the continent re: Omicron variant

Marlise presents the following points:

- A group of South African researchers had recently identified a new variant of COVID
- Countries in the Global North were quick to impose travel bans on countries in the Global South
- There is still a lot of uncertainty around the new variant
  - This has led to tons of mis/disinformation

- The global media has started to place blame on the African population and vaccine hesitancy

Maaza comments on Marlise's points and asks how best to respond to these accusations of vaccine hesitancy leading to the propagation of this new variant. She has concerns about South Africa being held as an example for the entire continent in the Global North media, despite the fact that SA is an outlier in many ways.

Anand Mandhvani ([COVID Kenya Initiative](#)) comments that he is worried about the spread of mis/disinformation and conspiracy theories. Anand also points out that the Kenyan government recently imposed vaccine mandates despite the complete lack of vaccine accessibility in the country.

Marlise agrees with points discussed, and adds that the issue of vaccine hesitancy is very complex, especially in South Africa (given its history of AIDS denialism, etc).

Vassie Naidoo ([People's Vaccine Campaign SA](#)) reiterates that conspiracy theories are plaguing the narrative around the new variant, especially in South Africa.

Kapil Narain (King Edward Hospital, South Africa and PVC SA) agrees that vaccine hesitancy is a multi-faceted issue. Kapil describes this surge of mis/disinformation as an "infodemic," and states that it is important to instill confidence and trust in individuals in a culturally sensitive way.

Kavengo Matundu ([Global Call to Action Against Poverty](#)) speaks about rising vaccine hesitancy in Kenya and explains that the new vaccination mandates put people at risk. Kavengo wonders if these "authoritarian" measures will be useful in curbing the spread of mis/disinformation.

Samson Orao ([ActionAid Kenya](#)) brings up concerns about the new push for Kenyan vaccination potentially leading to/fueling corruption.

Joab Okanda ([Christian Aid](#)) notes that once countries started receiving vaccines, governments did not invest as much as they should have in raising awareness and battling mis/disinformation.

- Joab notes that Christian Aid is actively trying to partner with media platforms to address mis/disinformation.
  - Anand points out that his group is also partnering with media outlets and influencers to combat the spread of mis/disinformation.

Charles Ebikeme ([London School of Economics](#)) agrees that anti-mis/disinformation efforts need to be stepped up.

Tian Johnson (African Alliance) reflects on this issue of vaccine hesitancy and explains that civil society organizations need to continue pushing for accountability, transparency, and continue holding local governments accountable for their actions when it comes to 1) vaccine access/equity, and 2) the spread of mis/disinformation.

## **Agenda Item 2: Updates on the African Week of Action/PVA [SEE TRANSCRIPT 55:11]**

Maaza Seyoum presents a series of updates from the PVA/Africa Week of Action Planning:

- Kusi Ideas Festival

- Will take place Dec. 10-11
- Christian Aid/PVA applied for and was granted a spot on a panel during which they will discuss issues of vaccine equity
- 5% Continent Webinar
  - Will take place Dec. 7
  - Topic is African Solidarity
  - Still trying to get a speaker from a country that is doing well with vaccine rollout (Morocco or Zimbabwe)
- Digital Memorial Wall
  - Google Form has been sent out
  - Maaza encourages group members to share the form with their network
  - PVA hopes to launch the wall on Dec. 8 (one year anniversary of non-trial vaccine delivery in UK)
- African Charter
  - Tian and Maaza thank everyone for their wonderful contributions
  - Document will be finalized and placed on the African Alliance website soon for signatures.
- PVA has received funds from the Ford Foundation and the Rockefeller Brothers Trust [SEE TRANSCRIPT 1:18:29]
  - Maaza and Tian remind the group that a PVA Africa steering committee will be set up to review calls for proposals for small grants that will come out of these funds.
  - Not clear if funding will be available just for “official” PVA members. That will be clarified.

**Agenda Item 3: Final Updates/Comments from Group [SEE TRANSCRIPT 1:20:54]**

- Anand proposes pitching an opinion piece to The Continent. Maaza and Tian agree that this would be a great idea.

Closing remarks by Maaza: Participants are encouraged to reach out to Maaza if they would like to join the PVA Africa WhatsApp group, would like to officially join the larger PVA or have any questions

([maaza@africanalliance.org.za](mailto:maaza@africanalliance.org.za)).

## Appendices

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[Meeting Transcript](#)

[Meeting Recording \(audio\)](#)