



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

## Ministry of Health

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS UNIT

Ground Floor Park Plaza, St. Vincent Street, Port of Spain

M E D I A R E L E A S E

8 May, 2021

### A Statement from the Honourable Terrence Deyalsingh, Minister of Health in response to Sinopharm COVID-19 Vaccine Untruths

**Port of Spain, 8 May 2021:** The Minister of Health strongly condemns the recent unfounded statements made by the UNC Member of Parliament Dr. Roodal Moonilal, on the Sinopharm Beijing COVID-19 vaccine, as the utterances are baseless and not grounded in science or fact.

The fact is the COVID-19 Sinopharm Beijing vaccine has undergone a rigorous World Health Organization (WHO) vaccine assessment, which included on-site inspections of the production facility prior to the WHO official approval of the Sinopharm Beijing vaccine for the Emergency Use Listing Procedure (EUL) on May 7<sup>th</sup> 2021. The WHO Assessment is the same review process used for Pfizer, Moderna, Johnson and Johnson and AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines, which all currently have EUL approval. The fact is MP Moonilal also received the same AstraZeneca vaccine which has EUL approval.

The Sinopharm Beijing vaccine has been authorized for use in 45 countries/jurisdictions and over 65 million doses of the Sinopharm vaccine have been administered through various emergency use programs.

The Emergency Use Listing (EUL) is a risk-based procedure for assessing and listing vaccines, with the ultimate aim of expediting the availability of these products to people affected by a public health emergency. The Minister reminds MP Moonilal and his cohorts that COVID-19 is a global public health emergency, aptly listed as the COVID-19 Pandemic.

WHO has confirmed the Sinopharm Beijing vaccine as having a very good safety and efficacy profile. On the basis of all available evidence, the Sinopharm vaccine efficacy is estimated at 78.1% for all age groups 18 years and over.

The erroneous comments made by MP Moonilal that Trinidad and Tobago will be used as guinea pigs only reinforces the MP's deliberate attempts to derail the country's vaccination drive and reinforces the continuous adverse position by the Opposition, led by Kamla Persad Bissessar, to anything positive for the people of Trinidad and Tobago. The Minister rebukes the falsifications by MP Moonilal and the continuous negative deliberations by the Opposition to create confusion in the society and thwart the overall objective by the Ministry of Health and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, to protect and save lives.

All vaccines procured on behalf of the people of Trinidad and Tobago are selected based on the robust standards of the WHO and absolutely no COVID-19 vaccine will be administered without WHO approval. To date, all COVID-19 vaccines administered in Trinidad and Tobago have received Emergency Use License (EUL) under the WHO.

The selection of vaccines will always be based on the safety of the lives of all citizens in Trinidad and Tobago, which is the Number 1 priority for the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and the Ministry of Health.

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