



## **Statement on the launch of Phase 2 of the National Vaccination Programme**

**16 May 2021**

**Martin Kingston, Chairman of the B4SA Steering Committee said:**

“Tomorrow’s launch of Phase 2 of our national vaccination programme targeting the balance of the health care workers and the over 60s is an historic moment. It marks a critical turning point in our 14-month fight against Covid-19.

“We thank the healthcare workers who have toiled tirelessly to save lives over the past year. I also want to acknowledge the work of the public servants and private volunteers across the breadth of the country who have brought us to this point.

“Although much has been done, we also realise that we need to maintain the high levels of cooperation and accelerate the scale of registration and vaccination. Business fully supports vaccination. In respect of COVID-19, vaccination is the best health policy, it is the best social policy, and it is the best economic policy.

“Since last year, business has worked with the National Department of Health and our colleagues in the Solidarity Fund to create the capacity to vaccinate the nation.

“Thousands of lives, and our ability to return to our way of life and ensure that we can put the economy on an optimal growth path, depends on us successfully implementing the vaccination roll out strategy and bringing all of our collective resources to bear.

“We are starting with the most vulnerable, our 5.4 million over 60’s, so that they can all be vaccinated by mid-winter. As soon as possible the vaccination programme will be extended to the balance of our adult population.

“The size and complexity of the task has been unprecedented. Never before have we had to implement such a comprehensive exercise, but we are confident that we have the vaccines, the distribution network, the system in the form of EVDS and the people to ensure that it works well.

“Brick by brick this enormous project has been assembled. Everyone realises the need to commence this Phase ahead of the onset of winter and through the third wave. We must complete the programme as quickly as possible.

“As business we have been proud to work alongside and in support of Government as they oversee the rollout of the vaccination programme. The work business has done has been as part of the national effort and at no cost to the country.

“We are mobilising vaccination sites throughout the country, be they hospitals, pharmacies, clinics and medical practices as well as Occupational health and safety sites across many sectors as well as larger facilities. Business has also ensured that we have the people to operate those sites across a



huge number of disciplines and competencies. We will be vaccinating healthcare workers as well as people allocated to those sites by EVDS.

“We will have a focused start tomorrow and will quickly ramp up our capacity. Over the coming days and weeks we will steadily and systematically open many more vaccination sites. To put that in context, tomorrow we will bring 13 private sites on line, capable of administering 3,500 vaccines per day increasing to nearly 40 sites by the end of this week and nearly 80 sites by the end of next week by which time we should have capacity of over 22,000 vaccinations per day.

“We are committed to solving any issues that arise quickly, efficiently, and comprehensively. At all times we are working on an integrated basis with Government and particularly the Department of Health, at National and Provincial levels.

“This is the start of a massive national effort. We ask for your support and cooperation. Everyone needs to play their part – to get registered, to help others to register and to get vaccinated as and when directed to do so.

“Together we will be able to address the threat that Covid-19 poses to our health, our lives, and our livelihoods.

“It will then be safe to lift Covid-19 restrictions so we can resume our way of life – free to practice our faith, socialise with family and friends; return to school or our studies; engage fully in the workplace, travel; and enjoy sport and culture as we used to do.

“Until then we must continue to observe the need to maintain social distance, wear masks and wash our hands.

“On a personal note, I am looking forward to receiving my own vaccination. I call on all to encourage registration and vaccination. Its free, its safe and it will enable our country to achieve its full potential.”

ENDS//