



Ending
disease
in Africa



Concept Note

Regional Immunization Stakeholders Meeting

Date: 10 November 2023

Venue: WHO Regional Office for Africa (WHO),
Brazzaville, Congo

Background

Vaccination is one of the most cost-effective ways of saving lives. The Immunization Agenda (IA) 2030 envisages “a world where everyone, everywhere, at every age, fully benefits from vaccines to improve health and well-being”. To achieve this, the WHO Africa Region has adopted the Regional Framework for the Implementation of the Immunization Agenda 2030 which sets ambitious targets, including eradicating polio and eliminating measles, rubella and maternal & neonatal tetanus, amongst others.

Over the past years, the Region has made tremendous progress in improving access to immunization, thanks to the efforts of governments, public and private sector partners, health workers and communities. Several diseases are now on the brink of elimination or eradication, and new vaccines have been introduced in many countries. New innovations and technologies are also being leveraged to deliver vaccines in hard-to-reach communities and advancing immunization equity.

Despite the remarkable progress and achievements, major challenges remain. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly disrupted routine immunization services, new vaccine introduction and vaccination campaigns. It is estimated that a total of 25 million children were un- or under-vaccinated in 2022 (WUENIC). This has resulted in various disease outbreaks in many parts of the Region and a heavier disease burden which is devastating not only for individuals suffering from

disease, but for communities and countries. Without urgent collaborative action and programme adaptations, vaccine-preventable diseases will continue to claim too many young lives.

Stronger and better coordinated partnerships are therefore urgently needed in order to more effectively support countries in the Region in addressing the various immunization challenges, bottlenecks and gaps. WHO, together with major partners such as Gavi and UNICEF, are committed to coordinating, strengthening and broadening a network of partners to jointly deliver on immunization priorities, including UN agencies, regional organizations, multilateral and bilateral donors, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), foundations, businesses and the research community.

It is in this context that WHO proposes to organize a meeting on November 10, 2023 in Brazzaville, Congo, for major immunization stakeholders at the global and regional level, including donors and partners, private sector, NGOs and research institutions, to align on priorities, share experience and best practices, and agree on actions going forward. It is expected that this immunization stakeholders’ meeting will provide an excellent platform for partners to share information, identify collaboration opportunities, strengthen coordination and ensure synergy, with a view to better supporting the Region in achieving its immunization goals and targets.

Main objectives

Main objectives of the meeting include:

- ▲ Foster a clear understanding of the region's immunization priorities amongst donors and partners;
- ▲ Secure financial commitment from key donors and partners to support regional immunization priorities;
- ▲ Identify good practice, challenges, innovations and lessons learned in partnerships from different stakeholder perspectives and ways forward to more effectively work together to contribute to immunization priorities of the region.

It is expected that by the end of the meeting,

- ▲ A shared vision is established amongst participants around the region's immunization priorities going forward;

- ▲ Good practice and innovations are identified, with strong commitment made by partners to scaling them up, and solutions to major immunization challenges proposed;
- ▲ Major funding opportunities are confirmed to support the implementation of regional immunization priorities.
- ▲ A meeting report with an action plan for donors and partners going forward will be produced, with concrete funding opportunities, based on the immunization priorities identified during the meeting. In addition, a follow-up mechanism will be established to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the action plan.

Methodology

The meeting will take the form of a plenary session and two panel discussions. For the plenary session, a presentation on the vision, current status and challenges of immunization will be made, which will end by a call for strengthened partnerships to address persistent challenges and bridge the remaining gaps. It will also set the scene and provide the background for further discussion.

The plenary session will be followed by two panel discussions, focusing on strengthening partner support and coordination to maximize impact and promoting innovative partnerships respectively. The first panel discussion will bring together major financial partners to discuss about the importance of donor coordination and opportunities to ensure sustainable resources for immunization programmes going forward. The second panel discussion, on the other hand, will focus on the roles of NGOs, businesses and research partners to drive the immunization agenda and how innovative partnerships could translate into concrete results on the ground.

As part of the meeting, major publications from the UCN cluster will be disseminated at the event, to share information but also serving as advocacy materials to raise aware-

ness of the region's disease challenges and priorities. These include but are not limited to:

- ▲ UCN vision document "Ending Disease in Africa";
- ▲ Country disease outlook series;
- ▲ Polio in the African Region
- ▲ TB in WHO African Region - progress update 2023
- ▲ The cervical cancer and HPV vaccine brochure distributed at RC73

In addition, other major regional and global strategic documents and reports should also be shared at this meeting:

- ▲ Immunization Agenda 2030
- ▲ Global Strategy to Eliminate Yellow Fever (EYE) 2017-2026
- ▲ Defeating Meningitis 2030
- ▲ Measles and rubella strategy framework 2021-2030
- ▲ Global Strategy for cervical cancer elimination
- ▲ GPEI Polio Eradication Strategy 2022-2026
- ▲ RD annual report 2022-2023
- ▲ iAHO regional factsheets on malaria, cervical cancer, hepatitis, TB etc.

Participants

About 50 immunization stakeholders are expected to attend the meeting, including representatives from:

Donor and partner agencies:

- ▲ The Gavi Secretariat
- ▲ US Department of Health and Human Services
- ▲ US CDC
- ▲ USAID
- ▲ Africa CDC
- ▲ Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF)
- ▲ Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), UK
- ▲ UNICEF
- ▲ World Bank
- ▲ Rotary International

Regional Organizations:

- ▲ West African Health Organization (WAHO)
- ▲ SADC Health Commission
- ▲ East African Community (EAC)
- ▲ East African Health Research Commission (EAHRC)
- ▲ Organisation de coordination pour la lutte contre les endémies en Afrique Centrale (OCEAC)

NGOs:

- ▲ The American Red Cross
- ▲ Médecins sans frontières (MSF)
- ▲ UN Foundation
- ▲ JSI
- ▲ Village Reach
- ▲ Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI)
- ▲ Unitaid
- ▲ Speak up Africa
- ▲ Cochrane South Africa
- ▲ GaneshAid
- ▲ Agence de médecine préventive (AMP)
- ▲ HAIER Biomedical
- ▲ GSK
- ▲ Johnson & Johnson Global Public Health (GPH)

Research institutions:

- ▲ Institut Pasteur de Dakar
- ▲ University of Geneva
- ▲ European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP)
- ▲ Sabine Vaccine Institute (BOOST)
- ▲ Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness and Innovation (CEPI)
- ▲ South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC)

Advisory committees

- ▲ RITAG

Dates and venue

The proposed date of the immunization stakeholders meeting is on November 10, 2023. The venue will be the WHO AFRO premises, in Brazzaville, Congo.

Proposed agenda