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News

Ghana hosts the launch of African Vaccination Week

[Ado Bwaka](#) and [Hilaire Dadjo](#), WHO/IST West, [Fred Osei-Sarpong](#), WHO Country Office, Ghana

The AFRO Region joined the World Immunization Week from 24-30 April 2021 under the same theme “Vaccines bring us closer”. The event was officially launched in Accra (Ghana) at Alisa Hotel on 26 April 2021. It was broadcast live by Ghana Broadcasting Corporation – the national TV station - and streamed on WHO Regional Office for Africa’s social media platforms.

Some high-profile personalities including the UN Resident Coordinator (Mr Charles Abani), the Regional Director for WHO/AFRO Region (Dr Matshidiso Moeti), the Gavi Senior Country Manager for Ghana (Mr Cyril Nogier) and the Minister of Health of Ghana (Hon. Kwaku Agyemang-Manu) highlighted the importance of strengthening immunization services and improving access to life-saving vaccines across the African continent.

One of the key activities was the one-hour panel discussion on immunization. It gathered the Director-General of Ghana Health Service (Dr Patrick Kuma-Aboagye), the National Deputy Director of the Essential Programme on Immunization (EPI) in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Dr Aimé Cikomola), the Deputy Executive Director of Speak Up Africa, an organization based in Dakar, Senegal (Mrs Fara Ndiaye) and the Regional Advisor for Health System Strengthening and a Senior Health specialist from UNICEF/WCARO (Ms Susie Villeneuve).

Panelists said that Africa was last year certified as free of wild polio virus, thanks to vaccination campaigns and strong surveillance, but that 20% of children remain unreached by routine immunization services. That is why the African Vaccination Week was instituted 11 years ago - to educate everyone on the core values of immunization and sustain the gains made to date in protecting populations against vaccine preventable diseases. And while the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted routine immunization services, the problems with supply of vaccines has highlighted the need for the continent to manufacture its own vaccines and limit its dependence on others. With regard to the vaccination itself, including against COVID-19, building trust in vaccines, trust in medical professionals and trust in governments should be at the center of all efforts. Additionally, political will and accountability, and securing resources to conduct immunization activities are needed while health workers, communities and civil society organizations are better recognized and supported in their roles and responsibilities.

The event was moderated by Dr Anarfi Asamoah-Baah, who is the current Presidential Coordinator for Ghana’s Coronavirus Response Programme and a former Deputy Director-General of WHO.

It should be recalled that Ghana was the first country in the world to receive an international shipment of COVID-19 vaccines through COVAX Facility.

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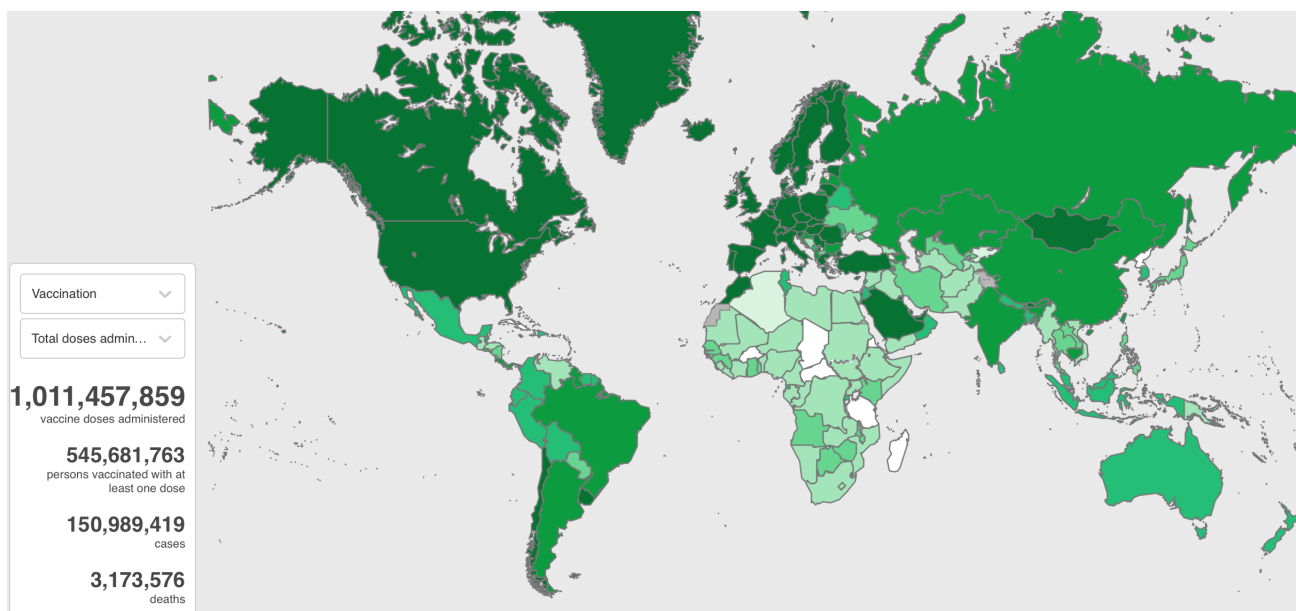
Update on the rollout of vaccines from COVAX

As the [first anniversary of the ACT-Accelerator](#) was marked by world leaders in late April, COVAX achieved a significant milestone: 120 participants received COVID-19 vaccines via the Facility, with over 49 million doses delivered despite supply constraints.

COVAX's primary objective is for all participant countries to receive a first shipment by May/June, with further deliveries to be phased once all countries have received a first shipment. With revised projections, the COVAX Facility is on track to attain supply for over 2 billion vaccines by the end of 2021.

While more countries continue to launch COVID-19 vaccination programmes, challenges have emerged due to funding gaps and hesitancy around vaccine safety, which have contributed to a lower-than-expected uptake in a few countries. There are ongoing efforts by COVAX partners to raise an additional \$2 billion to ensure the procurement of doses for all 92 AMC-eligible economies.

Information on COVID-19 vaccine deliveries is available on the [UNICEF Vaccine Market Dashboard](#), the [Gavi COVAX Roll Out Tracker](#) and the [WHO Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Dashboard](#) (please see below image). As of 29 April 2021, a total of 1,011,457,859 vaccine doses had been administered worldwide.



Above: screenshot from the WHO COVID-19 dashboard showing globally summary statistics as of 29 April 2021.

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Challenges and way forward for vaccination against COVID-19 in Niger

[Oumarou Batoure](#), WHO Niger Country Office

From the date of notification of the first case of COVID-19 on 19 March 2020 to 24 April 2021, 5,158 cases of COVID-19 with 191 deaths (case-fatality rate: 3.7%) have been reported in Niger.

To address this pandemic, the government of Niger, with technical and financial support from WHO and other partners, has implemented several strategies, including vaccination of the priority target population in order to reduce severe cases among infected individuals and, in the medium to long term, provide collective immunity to the population in order to break the disease transmission chain.

It is within this framework that the government of Niger received on 14 April 2021, 355,000 doses of Astra-Zeneca vaccine acquired within the framework of the COVAX initiative, whose distribution in the regions has begun. The vaccination will be conducted with technical and financial support from WHO and other partners (European Union, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, John Snow Inc., UNICEF, USAID, World Bank, etc.).



Launch of vaccination against COVID-19 in Niger: Former Prime Minister gets vaccinated sending a strong advocacy message for vaccination of the whole population.

It should be noted that Niger launched its vaccination campaign against COVID-19 on 29 March 2021 with the Sinopharm vaccine offered by the People's Republic of China within the framework of bilateral cooperation.



Family photo of officials at the ceremony to receive the first doses of Astra Zeneca's COVID-19 vaccine in Niger (Prime Minister in the center with 4 members of the government on his left and development partners on the right)

community radios, social media and influencers/celebrities, etc.

As of 24 April 2021, 9,562 people out of an expected target of 43,125, or 22.2%, have been vaccinated in Niamey, the capital of Niger, with the Sinopharm vaccine and seven minor cases of AEFI have been reported.

One of the challenges to vaccination uptake is related to misinformation on the vaccines circulating through social networks. To address this situation, the government of Niger, with the support of its partners, is intensifying communication to sensitize the population through various channels including mosques, churches, traditional chiefs, religious leaders,

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Enhanced Outreach Activities (EOA) for Essential Immunization in COVID-19 context of Pakistan

Dr Mohammed Osama Mere and Shah Nawaz Jiskani, WHO Country Office, Pakistan

To strengthen routine immunization in Pakistan, especially in the COVID-19 context, the Essential Programme on Immunization (EPI) in Pakistan and WHO conducted outreach activities during 2020 by remodeling them as “Enhanced Outreach Activities” which are characterized by providing: mobility support for service delivery, quality updated microplans and intensified monitoring.

Due to COVID-19, like other health services, vaccination has also been interrupted in Pakistan since end March 2020, and vaccination coverages have dropped drastically. For example, Penta 3 coverage dropped from 82% in February 2020 to 25% in April 2020.

Based on the successful EOA experience in 2019, essential immunization activities in Pakistan resumed using this effective model of EOA from June 2020 in all 154 districts. About 10,827 vaccination teams were deployed in the field, established outreach sites in the community, following all COVID-19 safety precautions recommended by WHO, they were provided training on Infection Prevention and Control (IPC), and were provided Personal Protective Equipment (Medical masks and sanitizers) and were monitored intensively. Vaccination sites were monitored by supervisors using the standard observer checklist developed and deployed on KOBOL-Collect a mobile app, and data was analyzed for feedback on the same day. Similarly, monitors were conducting Rapid Convenience Assessments (RCAs) in the community to verify coverages using the KOBOL mobile



Penta3 in Pakistan (Jan-Dec 2020) and impact of EOA

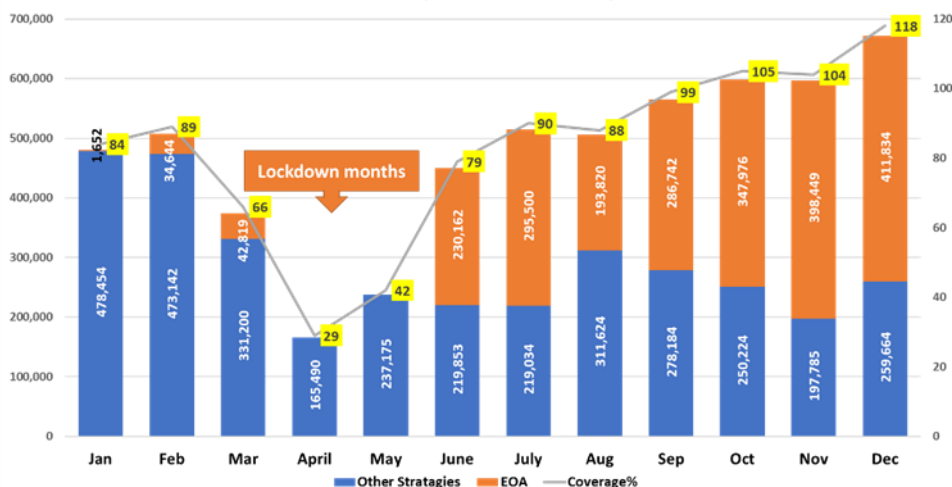
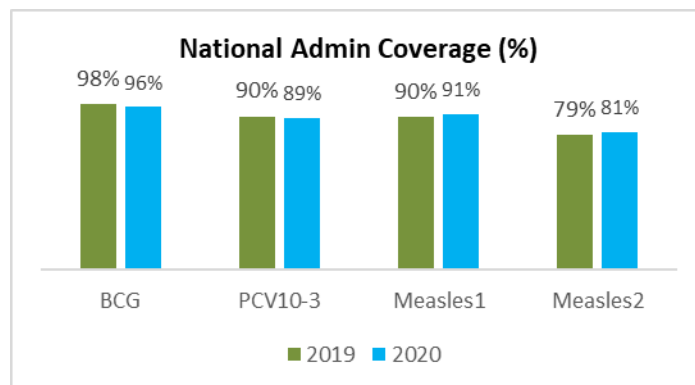


Figure 1: Vaccinator crossing a stream for vaccination of children in other side village.

app. During 2020, when the country was struggling to fight COVID-19, EOA gave outstanding results. About **2.4 million** children were vaccinated with all doses through EOA and most of them were **zero-dose** children.

Despite the COVID-19 situation, the effective implementation of the EOA resulted in sustaining the essential immunization coverage at the same level of the previous year; Penta3/PCV3/OPV3/IPV is now at 89% and Measles I is 91%. Government ownership of EOA is a good sign for the sustainability of this important immunization strategy which has been welcomed and supported by the Pakistan Pediatric Association.



Two years on: Malaria vaccine pilot programme progressing well

[Kristen Kelleher](#), WHO Headquarters

Two years on from the launch of the malaria vaccine pilot programme, more than 1.7 million doses of the world's first malaria vaccine have been administered in Ghana, Kenya and Malawi, benefitting more than **650 000 children** with additional malaria protection.

The number of children reached in this relatively short period indicates strong community demand for the vaccine as well as the capacity of the countries' child immunization programmes to deliver the vaccine on a novel schedule (four doses up to about age two years).



The second anniversary of the pilot launch coincides with the start of World Immunization Week and World Malaria Day. Lusitana (shown in image), from Malawi, was the first child in the world to receive the RTS,S malaria vaccine through routine immunization in the pilot programme. Today Lusitana is a toddler who is fully vaccinated with four doses. Read more [news on MVIP progress](#), a [feature on why mothers are welcoming this malaria vaccine](#) in pilot areas, and [an interview with the head of the Ghana malaria control programme](#). A full review of RTS,S evidence and a potential WHO recommendation for broader use of the vaccine across sub-Saharan Africa is expected in October 2021.

Featured resources: COVID-19 vaccines

Launch of country-level costing platform for COVID-19 vaccine implementation

[Linda Lucy Boulanger](#) and Ann Lindstrand, WHO Headquarters

On 30 April 2021, the WHO COVID-19 Partners Platform (PP), in collaboration with COVAX partners including the Country Readiness and Delivery workstream, will launch two new functionalities to support countries to mobilize financing resources to implement and scale up COVID-19 vaccination programming. As it has become [increasingly clear](#), one of the major challenges in vaccination campaigns is the lack of resources. To reach herd immunity and manage the COVID-19 pandemic, all countries must have enough human and financial resources to support the complex vaccination efforts in adults.

The two functionalities are (1) the ability to upload country resource needs and (2) the ability to view country resource tracking. Countries can upload the WHO COVID-19 vaccine introduction deployment costing tool (CVIC) tool 2.1 or manually input their costed needs to the PP across nine common costing categories that align with the WHO CVIC 2.1 tool and other donor frameworks.

The PP can be used as a tool to facilitate coordination, transparency and accountability, and support country-led discussions with Ministries of Health and Finance, immunization partners, and donors.

Background on the COVID-19 Partners Platform

The COVID-19 Partners Platform was developed by WHO and launched, in February 2020, with the UN Development Coordination Office, as an enabling tool for all countries, implementing partners, donors and contributors to collaborate in response to COVID-19 to coordinate and scale-up emergency preparedness, readiness, and response actions. The PP is a companion tool to the Strategic Preparedness and Response (SPRP) Operational Planning Guideline that guide WHO's coordinated action at national, regional and global levels.

The PP features real-time tracking to support the planning, implementation, and resourcing of country preparedness and response activities, [available at this link](#).

Accessing The COVID-19 Partners Platform

Request access to PP [here](#).

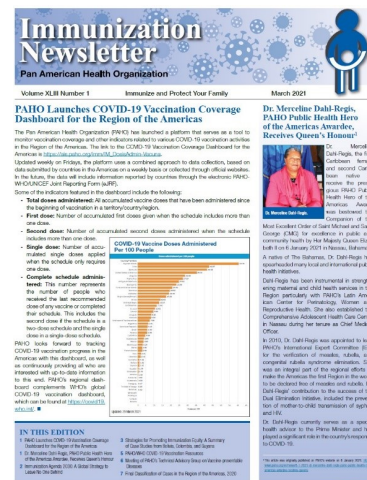
Resources

New Issue of PAHO's Immunization Newsletter is Published

[Comprehensive Family Immunization Unit](#), Pan American Health Organization

In this [issue](#):

- PAHO Launches COVID-19 Vaccination Coverage Dashboard for the Region of the Americas
- Dr Mercelene Dahl-Regis, PAHO Public Health Hero of the Americas Awardee, Receives Queen's Honour
- Immunization Agenda 2030: A Global Strategy to Leave No One Behind
- Strategies for Promoting Immunization Equity: A Summary of Case Studies from Bolivia, Colombia, and Guyana
- PAHO/WHO COVID-19 Vaccination Resources
- Meeting of PAHO's Technical Advisory Group of Vaccine-preventable Diseases
- Final Classification of Cases in the Region of the Americas, 2020.



If you would like to subscribe to PAHO's Immunization Newsletter, read past issues, or find out more information about this publication, please visit this page: <https://www.paho.org/en/tag/immunization-newsletter>

Annual immunization data is here, and you can see it!

Kristi James, WHO Headquarters

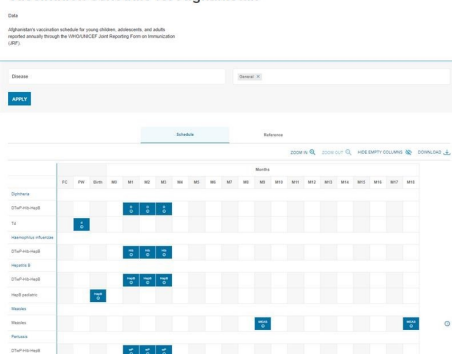
WHO's Immunization Data and Statistics web portal has undergone a major renovation and is now ready for visitors.

Over the past 24 months, WHO's Immunization Information System (WIISE) team has been working to provide an end-to-end solution for data collection (eJRF), harmonization (WIISEMart) and data visualization (the new portal).

The eJRF and WIISEMart launched earlier this year, and with the new portal, you can:

- Choose the information you want to visualize
 - Filter data by region, country, or other country groupings
- See the data you need to inform your work
 - Vaccine-preventable disease reported cases and incidence data
 - Vaccination coverage data over time

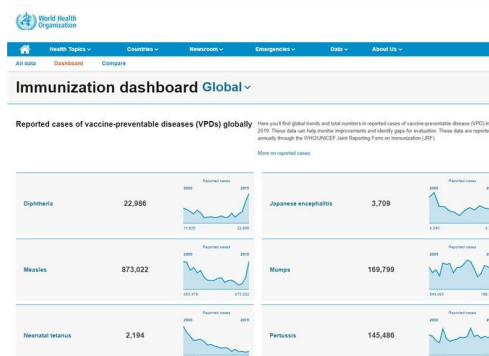
Vaccination schedule for Afghanistan



- Other immunization programme indicators
- Vaccine introductions
- Vaccine scheduler

- Use the interactive dashboard for an overview of all of the data listed above and then navigate to the information you need
- Make comparisons between datasets
- Compare datasets between reported cases, incidence rates, and vaccination coverage
- Visualize and analyze the data over time to identify trends and conduct time series analysis
- Use map animations to view data over time
- Export the data in order to analyze the data and refer to it later

Visit WHO's Immunization Data and Statistics page for access to the [new site](#).



COVID-19 Vaccine Toolkit

The [COVID-19 vaccine introduction toolkit](#) is a one-stop shop for guidance, tools and training to equip countries to prepare for and implement COVID-19 vaccination. Resources are now being translated into [Arabic](#), [Chinese](#), [French](#), [Russian](#) and [Spanish](#).

Intended to support Ministries of Health, health workers, partner organizations, and other stakeholders, the toolkit is organized in line with the [Guidance on Developing a National Deployment and Vaccination Plan for COVID-19 vaccines](#) and will be updated as new resources become available.

Topics covered include costing and financing, supply and logistics, human resources and training, vaccine safety, data and monitoring, vaccine acceptance and demand, and much more.

Recent additions include:

- [What is the CVIC Tool?](#) video, which explains the purpose of the COVID-19 Vaccine Introduction and Deployment Costing tool.
- Multilingual versions of the [Why are there extra doses of vaccine in the vaccine vial?](#) explainer.
- [Supportive supervision for COVID-19 vaccination](#), intended for supervisors who are supporting staff conducting COVID-19 vaccination.
- Multilingual versions of the [vaccine specific resources](#).

The toolkit has already recorded over 21,200 site visits leading to over 26,300 page views since its launch.

Thank you for helping disseminate these resources as far and wide as possible! For questions, comments, or feedback, please send an [email](#).



COVID-19 vaccine introduction toolkit



Countries are beginning to deploy COVID-19 vaccines, bringing new hope to the fight against the global pandemic. WHO, UNICEF working together to support countries in preparing for COVID-19 vaccine introduction. With careful planning, countries can ensure technical support available to safely deliver COVID-19 vaccines.

The COVID-19 vaccine introduction toolbox equips all countries to prepare for and implement COVID-19 vaccination by training. This toolbox is intended to support Ministries of Health, health workers, partner organizations, and other stakeholders.

The toolbox is organized in line with the [Guidance on Developing a National Deployment and Vaccination Plan for COVID-19 vaccines](#) and will be updated as new resources become available. For questions, comments, or feedback, please email COVID19vaccineresources@who.int.

- [Developing a National Deployment and Vaccination Plan \(NDVP\)](#)
- [Submitting a National Deployment and Vaccination Plan \(NDVP\)](#)
- [Regulatory preparedness](#)
- [Indemnification and liability](#)
- [Costing and funding](#)
- [Target populations and delivery strategies](#)

Above: Website home page for the COVID-19 vaccine introduction toolkit

Links

Organizations and Initiatives

American Red Cross

[Child Survival](#)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[Polio](#)

[Global Vaccines and Immunization](#)

Johns Hopkins

[International Vaccine Access Center](#)

[Value of Immunization Compendium of Evidence \(VoICE\)](#)

[VIEW-hub](#)

JSI

[IMMUNIZATIONbasics](#)

[Immunization Center](#)

[Maternal and Child Health Integrated Program \(MCHIP\)](#)

[Publications and Resources](#)

[Universal Immunization through Improving Family Health Services \(UI-FHS\) Project in Ethiopia](#)

PAHO

[ProVac Initiative](#)

PATH

[Better Immunization Data \(BID\) Initiative](#)

[Center for Vaccine Innovation and Access](#)

[Defeat Diarrheal Disease Initiative](#)

[Malaria Vaccine Initiative](#)

[RHO Cervical Cancer](#)

Sabin Vaccine Institute

[Boost – A Global Community of Immunization Professionals](#)

UNICEF

[Immunization](#)

[Supplies and Logistics](#)

USAID

[USAID Immunization](#)

[USAID Maternal and Child Survival Program](#)

WHO

[Department of Immunization, Vaccines & Biologicals](#)

[ICO Information Centre on HPV and Cancer](#)

[National programmes and systems](#)

[Immunization planning and financing](#)

[Immunization monitoring and surveillance](#)

[National Immunization Technical Advisory Groups Resource Center](#)

[SIGN Alliance](#)

Other

[Coalition Against Typhoid](#)

[Confederation of Meningitis Organizations](#)

[Dengue Vaccine Initiative](#)

[European Vaccine Initiative](#)

[Gardasil Access Program](#)

[Gavi the Vaccine Alliance](#)

[Global Polio Eradication Initiative](#)

[Immunization Academy](#)

[International Association of Public Health Logisticians](#)

[Immunization Economics resource](#)

[International Vaccine Institute](#)

[Measles & Rubella Initiative](#)

[Multinational Influenza Seasonal Mortality Study](#)

[Network for Education and Support in Immunisation \(NESI\)](#)

[Stop Pneumonia](#)

[TechNet-21](#)

[Vaccine Safety Net](#)

[Vaccines Today](#)

WHO Regional Websites

[Routine Immunization and New Vaccines \(AFRO\)](#)

[Immunization \(PAHO\)](#)

[Vaccine-preventable diseases and immunization \(EMRO\)](#)

[Vaccines and immunization \(EURO\)](#)

[Immunization \(SEARO\)](#)

[Immunization \(WPRO\)](#)

UNICEF Regional Websites

[Immunization \(Central and Eastern Europe\)](#)

[Immunization \(Eastern and Southern Africa\)](#)

[Immunization \(South Asia\)](#)

[Immunization \(West and Central Africa\)](#)

[Child survival \(Middle East and Northern Africa\)](#)

[Health and nutrition \(East Asia and Pacific\)](#)

[Health and nutrition \(Americas\)](#)

Newsletters

[Immunization Monthly update in the African Region \(AFRO\)](#)

[WHO/Europe Vaccine-preventable diseases and immunization \(VPI\) news \(EURO\)](#)

[Immunization Newsletter \(PAHO\)](#)

[The Civil Society Dose \(GAVI CSO Constituency\)](#)

[TechNet Digest](#)

[Vaccine Delivery Research Digest \(Uni of Washington\)](#)

[Gavi Programme Bulletin \(Gavi\)](#)

[Immunization Economics Community of Practice](#)