

Partnership Council statement on the latest WUENIC release

The members of the Immunization Agenda 2030 Partnership Councilⁱ have come together to make the following statement in response to new data from WHO and UNICEF on 2022 immunization coverage.

In 2020 as the leaders of the global Immunization Agenda 2030 Partnership Council we committed that no-one would be left behind in ensuring that the world is protected against deadly diseases through the power of vaccines. Throughout the pandemic we saw unprecedented falls in immunization coverage and warned of a potential missed generation of children who received no vaccinations during that period. Building on the leadership of countries, we are taking action through a joint recovery plan to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and to get back on track and accelerate progress towards IA2030 targets. Immunization Agenda 2030 partners, including WHO, UNICEF, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, along with other IA2030 global and national health partners, launched the Big Catch-up effort in 2023, to galvanise action and highlight on a public stage the crisis caused by this historic backsliding.

The new figures released by WHO and UNICEF today underline the power of acting together and also that we must redouble our efforts to ensure a more equitable and faster recovery from the pandemic as well as reaching those that were missed during the pandemic. We are heartened to see that there have been promising signs of recovery with global coverage nearly back to pre-pandemic levels. However, the recovery is very uneven across countries and vaccines, significant immunity gaps remain, and we note with particular concern that:

- Global efforts for immunization recovery and strengthening are uneven;
- The global average of recovery in coverage masks the lack of progress made in those countries where vulnerable, high risk communities remain unreached, largely in low income and fragile and conflict settings;
- Measles is an unforgiving disease and the latest data clearly show serious lapses in measles coverage, with large immunity gaps in communities causing large and disruptive outbreaks in an increasing number of countries.

Regions that have made sustained improvements in immunization coverage over the decade pre-pandemic, have also shown the greatest resilience following it. Regions with stagnating and declining coverage have continued along that course. So our focus must also be long term, systemic and go beyond catch-up campaigns.

We are concerned that inequities in immunization remain significant and that children are being left behind.

Our shared priority is to ensure that every child has access to vaccines, no matter where they live. We remain focused on continuing the catch-up, recovery, and strengthening efforts to reach “zero dose children”, including over two years of age, and ensuring they receive all the vaccines which they need, by addressing the high dropout rate after first vaccination, particularly in low-income countries. We also underscore the need to improve coverage and make more rapid progress in measles vaccination rates. Our shared priority is to ensure that every child has access to vaccines no matter where they live, and we recognise that to strengthen recovery, we need to consider the broader risks across immunization systems as well as focusing on coverage and zero dose.

We commit as partners to align our global efforts and work together within our respective remits to take the necessary actions required to support countries to strengthen their immunization systems for the long term to ensure that universal, equitable recovery and ongoing vaccine research is achieved.

Signed by IA2030 Partnership Council Members:

Name	Organization
Dr Jean Kaseya	Africa CDC Director General of the Africa CDC
Ms Violaine Mitchell	Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Director, Immunization
Dr Endie Waziri	Chair of the Gavi CSO Steering Committee (Interim representative)
Dr. Seth Berkley	Gavi, The Vaccine Alliance Chief Executive Officer
Dr Lee (B. Fenton) Hall	National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases/NIH, Chief, Parasitology & International Programs
Dr Xavier Castellanos	The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Under Secretary General (National Society Development and Operations Coordination)
Dr. Omar Abdi	UNICEF Deputy Executive Director
Ms Eva Kadilli	UNICEF Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa
Dr. Bruce Aylward	WHO Assistant Director-General (Universal Health Coverage, Life Course Division)
Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh	WHO Regional Director for South-East Asia
Dr Ahmed Al Mandhari	WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean
Dr Juan Pablo Uribe	World Bank Global Director for Health Nutrition and Population
Ms Kate Gilmore	Unaffiliated non-representational Member (human rights activist and professor in practice, Australia)
Ms Ayesha Raza Farooq	Unaffiliated non-representational Member (politician and child rights advocate, Pakistan)
Dr Eleanor Nwadinobi	Unaffiliated non-representational Member (women's health advocate, Nigeria)