

DECLARATION ON

“Universal Access to Immunization as a Cornerstone for Health and Development in Africa”

Available at: <http://immunizationinafrica2016.org/ministerial-declaration-english/>, accessed March 2016

We, African Ministers of Health, Finance, Education, Social Affairs, Local Governments attending the Ministerial Conference on Immunization in Africa, which took place from 24 to 25 February 2016 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and convened by the World Health Organization in collaboration with the African Union Commission, are committed to continued investment in immunization programs and a healthy future for all people of the African continent.

Recognizing the tremendous advances that are improving the health of Africa’s citizens, including:

- A 50% decline in child death rates, and ever-growing numbers of children attending school;
- Widespread access to vaccines that were not available to African children and adults just a decade ago;
- Higher vaccine coverage rates across the continent in each five-year periods between 1999-2014;
- The remarkable achievement of the Africa continent for interrupting wild poliovirus transmission for more than one year; achieving near elimination of Meningococcal meningitis A epidemics, and the significant reduction in disease burden and mortality due to measles.

Bearing in mind the recently ratified Sustainable Development Goal target of Universal Health Coverage which calls for access to immunisation for all (New York, September 2015); and that health is fundamental to social and economic development;

Acknowledging that, broad-based, inclusive growth in Africa is dependent on a healthy population; and that strong immunization programs are a cornerstone of robust systems that help achieving universal health coverage, which is critical to helping national leaders achieve their economic and development goals;

Reaffirming the economic imperative and benefits of reducing vaccine-preventable diseases and consequential deaths, which will improve overall health, empower our future generation and allow every person to achieve his or her full potential;

Recalling the Heads of State Declaration on Polio Eradication in Africa: “Our Historic Legacy to Future Generations” (Johannesburg, June 2015); the World Health Assembly resolution (WHA68.6) on the Global Vaccine Action Plan (Geneva, May 2015), the commitment made by African Ministers of Health on Universal Health Coverage in Africa (Luanda, April 2014); the Immunize Africa 2020 Declaration (Abuja, May 2014) endorsed by African Heads of State; the World Health Assembly resolution that commits all 194 Member States to apply the vision and strategies of the Global Vaccine Action Plan (GVAP) (Geneva, May 2012), and the African Heads of State endorsement of the Pharmaceutical

Manufacturing Plan in 2012 as the framework for African people to have access to essential, quality, safe and effective medical products and technologies.

Recognizing that despite progress, universal access to immunisation by 2020, as endorsed under the GVAP, is largely off track in Africa as indicated by the 2014 GVAP report; but that with resolve we can still achieve the GVAP target of at least 90% coverage in our countries and at least 80% coverage in every district for all nationally available vaccines;

Admitting that to sustain the progress made in vaccine introduction and coverage – and achieve the full potential to save children’s and adult’s lives – current national budgetary allocations to vaccination programmes within the context of national health systems financing will need to be further increased;

We hereby collectively and individually commit ourselves to:

- Keeping universal access to immunisation at the forefront of our efforts to reduce child mortality, morbidity and disability, and in doing so help our countries achieve their long-term health, economic and development goals;
- Increasing and sustaining our domestic investments and funding allocations, including innovative financing mechanisms, to meet the cost of traditional vaccines, fulfil our new vaccine financing requirements, and providing financial support for the operational implementation of immunization activities by EPI programs;
- Addressing the persistent barriers in our vaccine and healthcare delivery systems, especially in the poorest, vulnerable and most marginalized communities, including the strengthening of data collection, reporting and use at all levels as well as building effective and efficient supply chains and integrated procurement systems;
- Increasing the effectiveness and efficiency, as well as changing the approaches as needed, of our immunization delivery systems as an integrated part of strong and sustainable primary health care systems;
- Attaining and maintaining high quality surveillance for targeted vaccine preventable diseases.
- Monitoring progress towards achieving the goals of the global and regional immunization plans
- Ensuring polio legacy transition plans are in place by end-2016 that will allow future health programs to benefit from the knowledge and expertise the polio program has generated through the eradication initiative;
- Developing a capacitated African research sector to enhance immunization implementation and uptake;
- Building broad political will, working with communities, civil society organizations, traditional and religious leaders, health professional associations and parliamentarians, for the right of every child and every community to have universal access to life-saving vaccines, and by extension the best possible chance for a healthy future;
- Promoting and investing in regional capacity for the development and production of vaccines in line with the African Union Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Plan including the strengthening of national regulatory authorities.

We call upon:

- Member states and partners, including African development banks and African regional economic communities, to support the implementation of this Declaration, and to increase their efforts to mobilize resources and secure new investments to strengthen national immunization programmes to achieve the GVAP goals and overall health care delivery systems in the Member States;
- Member states and partners, to negotiate with vaccine manufacturers to facilitate access to available vaccines at affordable prices, and in increasing price transparency as well as developing price databases in line with resolution WHA68.6;
- Gavi, the vaccine alliance to consider refugees and internally displaced populations as eligible recipients of Gavi support for vaccines and operational costs;
- The World Health Organization and the African Union Commission to support member states to share experiences, strengthen capacity, and establish mechanisms for monitoring progress towards the fulfilment of these commitments.

We thank his Excellency Hailemariam Desalegn, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, and host country for this Ministerial Conference on Immunization in Africa, for agreeing to champion this declaration and further request him to present it to the African Heads of States at the 26th Summit of the African Union, to be held in June 2016.

Done at Addis Ababa on 25 February 2016