

# Roadmap for Implementing the Addis Declaration on Immunization: Executive Summary



## Background

Immunization saves lives, makes communities more productive, and is a core component of strengthening health systems and attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

While Africa has made tremendous gains toward increasing access to immunization in the last 15 years, progress has stagnated, leaving one in five African children without access to life-saving vaccines. As a result, vaccine-preventable diseases continue to claim too many lives.

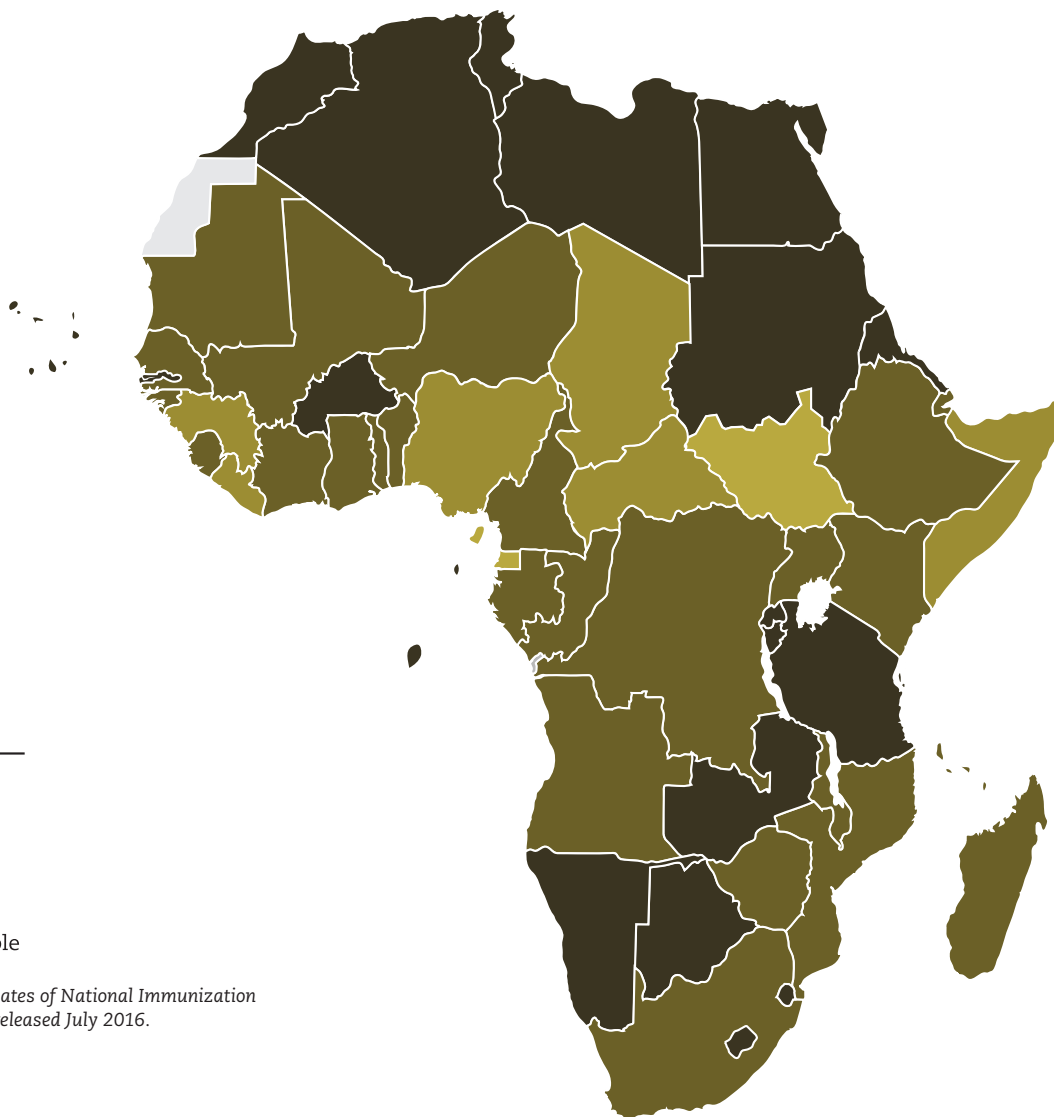
On January 31, 2017, at the 28th African Union (AU) Summit, Heads of State from across Africa endorsed the Addis Declaration on Immunization (ADI), thereby committing to advance universal access to immunization across Africa. The ADI was initially drafted and signed by ministers and other high-level representatives at the Ministerial Conference on Immunization in Africa (MCIA) in February 2016. Statements of support have been issued by civil society organizations, religious leaders from across faiths, and parliamentarians to support countries in the implementation of the ADI.

The ADI includes ten commitments to achieve universal and equitable access to immunization on the African continent (see sidebar). This roadmap outlines strategies for Member States to accelerate progress on the ADI commitments. The roadmap was developed in close collaboration with the World Health Organization's (WHO) offices in the African Region (AFRO) and Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMRO), the AU Commission, and immunization partners. The roadmap builds on and complements existing efforts aimed at improving immunization in Africa and around the world, particularly the Global Vaccine Action Plan (GVAP).

## Addis Declaration on Immunization Commitments

1. Keeping universal access to immunization at the forefront of our efforts to reduce child mortality, morbidity, and disability, and in doing so helping our countries achieve their long-term health, economic, and development goals.
2. 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 Expanded Programme on Immunization programs.
3. 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.
4. 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 healthcare systems.
5. Attaining and maintaining high quality surveillance for targeted vaccine preventable diseases.
6. Monitoring progress toward achieving the goals of the global and regional immunization plans.
7. 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.
8. Developing a capacitated African research sector to enhance immunization implementation and uptake.
9. 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.
10. 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.

## 2015 DTP3 Coverage by Country



## Strategies for Expanding Universal Access to Immunization

The ADI roadmap outlines three strategies for Member States to incorporate into existing efforts to improve immunization coverage.

### Roadmap Strategies:

1. Generate and sustain political commitment and funding for immunization through advocacy and communications
2. Address gaps in immunization and work with key partners to overcome barriers to access and utilization of immunization services
3. Monitor progress to drive impact and ensure accountability

## Strategy 1: Generate and Sustain Political Commitment and Funding for Immunization through Advocacy and Communications

Member States can use evidence-based advocacy and communications activities to maintain and increase political will and funding for immunization and build demand at the community level.

### The approaches outlined in this section include:

- **Develop Effective Messages:** Immunization messaging must be accurate and strategic. All stakeholders at the national and sub-national levels have an important role to play in ensuring that evidence-based and culturally-sensitive messages reach different audiences — from decision-makers to communities — to maintain political will and drive demand for vaccines at the local level. Messages must be tailored for each audience, based on their specific knowledge and beliefs, to ensure resonance.
- **Identify, Develop, and Engage Immunization Champions, Particularly National and Sub-National Leaders:** Champions — highly influential stakeholders, such as Heads of State, ministers, parliamentarians, and state-level leaders, who actively push for policy and programmatic changes — have a profound impact on immunization in Africa. National-level leaders can leverage their unique positions to champion immunization through various forums at the sub-national, national, regional, and global levels. Significant efforts should be made to identify other trusted champions, such as renowned scientists, service providers, community and religious leaders, and artists, who can elevate the issue of immunization through the media, public-facing forums, and their communities.
- **Engage in Advocacy and Communications Activities at the Community Level:** To achieve the ADI commitments, it is necessary to build support for immunization within communities. Researching and understanding barriers to immunization at the local level, engaging influential members of the community to speak out in support of immunization, and developing targeted communications strategies are all ways to increase uptake of existing immunization services and raise awareness about new vaccines.

## Strategy 2: Address Gaps in Immunization and Work with Key Partners to Overcome Barriers to Access and Utilization of Immunization Services

Beyond political commitment and financing, Member States will need to strengthen technical capacity at the national and local levels to drive universal access to vaccines.

### The approaches outlined in this section include:

- **Focus on Improving Access and Equity:** Closing the immunization access gap between countries' lowest and highest wealth quintiles is essential for achieving the ADI commitments and SDGs. To ensure that vaccine access is equitable, Member States must address challenges on both the supply side (e.g., weak health infrastructure) and the demand side (e.g., low community awareness about immunization). Suggested tactics range from improving program planning at the community level and investing in strengthening health systems to ensuring communities are informed of their right to access quality immunization services.
- **Improve Immunization Program Monitoring and Vaccine-Preventable Disease Surveillance:** Improved data quality and strong vaccine-preventable disease surveillance can guide immunization policies and address program gaps. Member States with poor quality or insufficient data on immunization should allocate resources toward improving data collection systems at the national and sub-national levels, consider new approaches and technologies for monitoring, and build stronger capacity to analyze data and apply data to program management, among other actions. Additionally, strong surveillance systems are needed to measure the impact of diseases and ensure that immunization targets are being reached.
- **Efficiently Manage Resources and Prepare for Upcoming Transitions and Their Impact on Immunization Programs and Programmatic Sustainability:** Over the next few years, all countries should aim to sustainably finance their immunization programs through a combination of additional resource mobilization and more efficient management and use of currently available resources. Funding for polio eradication will gradually ramp down by 2020 and some countries in Africa are transitioning away from eligibility for immunization support through Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. Member States must begin preparing early for these significant shifts in financing to ensure that vaccine access is uninterrupted.





Photo: World Health Organization/E. Soterias Jalil

- **Expand and Invest in Africa-Based Research, Development, and Production of Vaccines:** Signatories to the ADI committed to strengthen national regulatory authorities, build clinical trial capacity, and promote investments in Africa's immunization research sector. Additional efforts — by Member States and regional coordinating bodies — are needed in this area to improve research capacity; enhance regulatory oversight for the development and approval of new vaccines that meet quality, safety, and efficacy standards; and build manufacturing capacity.

### Strategy 3: Monitor Progress to Drive Impact and Ensure Accountability

Strong monitoring and accountability efforts are needed to ensure the success of the ADI and achieve universal access to immunization in Africa. There are national, regional, and global monitoring and accountability systems for immunization already in place (e.g., WHO AFRO and WHO EMRO regional plans, GVAP progress reports) that can be used to track Member States' progress toward and hold them accountable for the ADI commitments. WHO AFRO, WHO EMRO, and the AUC will build and expand on these efforts by reporting annually at the AU level on Member States' progress on a core set of ADI indicators that are outlined in the roadmap. Specifically, these organizations will: 1) collate and synthesize Member States' data through existing

reporting mechanisms, 2) document progress toward roadmap indicators, 3) coordinate an independent review body comprised of representatives from immunization partner organizations, 4) disseminate annual regional progress reports to all Member States, and 5) provide and/or coordinate technical assistance for Member States, if necessary.

## Implementing the ADI Roadmap

This roadmap has been developed with the aim of providing Member States with a framework to achieve the ADI commitments. While Member States will take the lead, multilaterals, donors, civil society organizations, and others have expressed their willingness to support and work with countries to ensure the successful implementation of the ADI. Notably, WHO AFRO, WHO EMRO, and the AUC have proposed the establishment of a secretariat to provide technical assistance and help monitor progress toward achieving the ADI commitments.

Working together, Member States and their partners can make tremendous progress in the coming years toward ensuring that all people in Africa have access to the vaccines they need to live healthier and more productive lives, ultimately driving sustainable development across the continent.