

Report of the AFRICAN VACCINATION WEEK 2015



**Vaccination,
a gift for life**

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AVW	African Vaccination Week
CAM	communication, advocacy and media
CAH	Child and Adolescent Health
CDC	Centres for Disease Control and Prevention
DPT	diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus
EGPAF	Elizabeth Glaser Paediatric AIDS Foundation
EPI	Expanded Programme on Immunization
ESARO	UNICEF East and Southern Africa Regional Office
FAQ	frequently asked questions
FMOH	Federal Ministry of Health
GAVI	Global Alliance for Vaccines & Immunization
GVAP	Global Vaccine Action Plan
HepB	hepatitis B
Hib	<i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> Type B
HIV/AIDS	human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome
ITNs	insecticide treated nets
IST	Inter-Country Support Team
IVD	Immunization and Vaccines Development Cluster
MCV	measles containing vaccines
MNCHW	Maternal, New-born and Child Health Week
MoHS	Ministry of Health and Sanitation
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
OPV	oral polio vaccine
ORS	oral rehydration salts
PCV	pneumococcal conjugate vaccine
REJAV	<i>Réseau des Journalistes Amis de la vaccination</i>
TFI	Task Force on Immunization
TT	tetanus toxoid
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VDC	village development committees
VHC	village health committees
WCARO	UNICEF West and Central Africa Regional Office
WCO	WHO Country Office
WIW	World Immunization Week
WPV	wild poliovirus
WHA	World Health Assembly
WHO	World Health Organization
WHO/AFRO	WHO Regional Office for Africa

FOREWORD

The African Vaccination Week (AVW) was celebrated by Member States in the WHO African Region from 24 to 30 April 2015. For the fifth consecutive year, countries in the African Region celebrated the week to increase public awareness and community demand for immunization, improve access for high-risk populations and hard-to-reach areas in the Region as well as advocate for mobilization of resources for immunization. Countries also used the opportunity to increase demand and utilization for other lifesaving interventions particularly those targeting women and children under five.

This year's theme "*Vaccination, a gift for life*" underlined the fact that vaccination is a gift that protects people at all ages against diseases. Vaccination is one of the greatest advances in human history. Vaccines save millions of lives each year and are among the most cost-effective health interventions ever developed. Receiving routine immunizations is essential to attain the highest standard of health, particularly for children to become healthy, productive adults.

It is estimated that about 3 million children under five years of age die each year in the African Region and a significant number, around 30% of these deaths could be prevented by vaccines. Although countries in the Region have made commendable progress in reducing vaccine-preventable diseases, more needs to be done. The recently endorsed Regional Immunization Strategic Plan 2014–2020 should be translated into national priorities and actions as it aims to provide universal access to immunization and other life-saving interventions for everyone by 2020, particularly for vulnerable populations.

Introduced five years ago, the AVW is now known for promoting the benefits of immunization during a person's life, and the delivery of life-saving interventions in the WHO African Region. Indeed, hundreds of millions of children, adolescents, women, and men were vaccinated and/or received other health interventions in previous African Vaccination Weeks. Great achievements have been recorded in the control of some of the vaccine-preventable diseases such as measles, epidemic meningococcal type A meningitis, polio and others.

The ongoing success of AVW strongly depends on the ability of countries to include AVW into their strategic and annual national immunization plans and to allocate resources for implementation of activities. Achieving this noble goal will also require addressing barriers to vaccination, and making substantial and sustained additional investments in health systems.

This year, AVW was celebrated in close collaboration with governments and immunization partners in 44 out of the 47 countries in our Region. This report summarizes the events that occurred in these countries and describes various activities that improved access to immunization and other life-saving interventions. The WHO Regional Office for Africa will continue to work with governments and stakeholders to strengthen health systems in order to attain universal health coverage and protect everyone's fundamental human right to health.



Dr. Matshidiso Moeti
Regional Director

1.0 INTRODUCTION

African Vaccination Week 2015 was celebrated alongside the 4th annual World Immunization Week that serves as the overarching framework for immunization week initiatives in all WHO Regions. In each WHO Region, this week is dedicated to creating awareness on the importance of vaccination across the life course and working to ensure the universal access of individuals of all ages and in all countries to this essential preventive health service.

1.2 Goal and objectives of African Vaccination Week

1.2.1 Goal

To strengthen immunization programmes in the African Region by drawing attention to and increasing awareness of the importance of every person's (particularly children and women) need and right to be protected from vaccine-preventable diseases.

1.2.2 Objectives

- To increase stakeholder awareness of the value and benefit of immunization.
- To promote and maintain immunization as a priority for decision-makers.
- To advocate for and mobilize human, financial and material resources for immunization.
- To increase demand and utilization of immunization services.
- To improve access for high-risk populations and hard-to-reach areas in the Region.



2.0 ACTIVITIES DURING AFRICAN VACCINATION WEEK 2015

2.1 African Vaccination Week 2015 regional activities

As in previous years, a number of activities were conducted at the regional level. These included: feature stories, revised FAQ's on AVW, Regional Director's message, a press release and media advisory interventions for the regional launch. All these were shared with the countries and posted on the AVW 2015 website under the link: <http://www.afro.who.int/en/media-centre/events/african-vaccination-week/2015.html>



The regional launch of AVW 2015 took place in Lusaka, Zambia on 23 April 2015 with the First Lady of Zambia, Mrs Esther Lungu kicking off the events to commemorate the occasion. She encouraged countries in Africa and immunization partners to make all efforts to reach the unreached children with vaccinations to avoid disease outbreaks and child mortality. "No child in the African Region should die because we have denied them life-saving vaccines," said Mrs Lungu, as she pledged her support to continue reducing mortality due to childhood illnesses in her country.



In remarks delivered on her behalf by Dr Jacob Mufunda, WHO Representative to Zambia at the AVW commemoration, the WHO Regional Director for Africa, Dr Matshidiso Moeti noted that vaccination is a gift that protects people of all ages against life-threatening diseases and underscored the urgent need for multisectoral collaboration to adopt locally-tailored approaches to maximize accessibility and utilization of immunization services. She called on countries and partners to redouble efforts in resource mobilization and allocation to sustain and improve on the concerted efforts already made in reducing vaccine preventable diseases in the Region.

All countries in the African Region were urged to make efforts to reach all children during this AVW with special emphasis on children of vaccine-hesitant parents, geographically hard-to-reach areas and conflict zones. Dr Moeti applauded most families and parents for participating in country specific immunization schedules and prioritizing the overall health and well-being of their children, but noted that increased awareness of the benefits of immunization is still needed at the community level, during this week and beyond.

UNICEF Resident Representative in Zambia, Mr Hamid Al Bashir called on countries to ensure that no child would be missed with life-saving vaccines. He reiterated that there are still about 20% of children unvaccinated in the Region and thus there is a need to identify the missed children and make collaborated efforts to reach them. "There is need for a rigorous multisectoral approach towards reaching the unreached children with immunization in our midst. We must involve traditional and religious leaders, partner organizations and the private sector," said Mr Al Bashir.

Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Community Development Mother and Child Health, Prof Elwyn Chomba called on partners to support African countries to mobilize resources for the re-establishment of outreach services and more involvement of the women's organizations in child health activities to address the issue of unimmunized children.

2.2 African Vaccination Week 2015 country activities

During the week of 24 to 30 April 2015, 28 of the 47 countries in the African Region celebrated African Vaccination Week (AVW). However, immunization

events linked to AVW continued in 15 other countries in the Region from May to September 2015. Comoros, Gabon & Cape Verde did not celebrate this year's event.

As in previous years, reports from Member States indicate that countries used the occasion to hold round-table discussions, advocacy and social mobilization activities for immunization, training sessions, various immunization activities such as 'catch up' vaccination or campaigns against vaccine preventable diseases, introduction of new vaccines into national routine immunization programmes, as well as the provision of life-saving interventions such as deworming, vitamin A supplementation, distribution of mosquito nets, growth monitoring, HIV and/or malaria testing. See Table 1 for details.

Table 1: Interventions in the countries during the AVW 2015

Planned/conducted Interventions during AVW 2015	Number of countries	Countries
Advocacy/communication & social mobilization activities	43	All countries in the African Region except Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Comoros & Gabon Celebration of 40 years of EPI in Tanzania
Catch-up vaccination activities combined or not with Vitamin A & deworming.	17	Angola, Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Central African Republic, Congo, DRC, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, Uganda
Combined with Mother & Child Health Days	11	Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Eritrea, Ghana, Madagascar, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone
Distribution of LLITNs	4	Cote d'Ivoire
Growth monitoring	3	Eritrea, Cote d'Ivoire
Integrated Polio & measles campaign combined with Vit A	2	Guinea, Liberia, Eritrea
New vaccines introduction	2	IPV in DRC
Prevention of pneumonia & diarrhoea in the framework of IMCI and GAPPD	2	Swaziland, Zambia
Launching of NITAG	1	Kenya

2.3 Communication activities

During African Vaccination Week 2015, mixed communication strategies were used both at regional and country level.

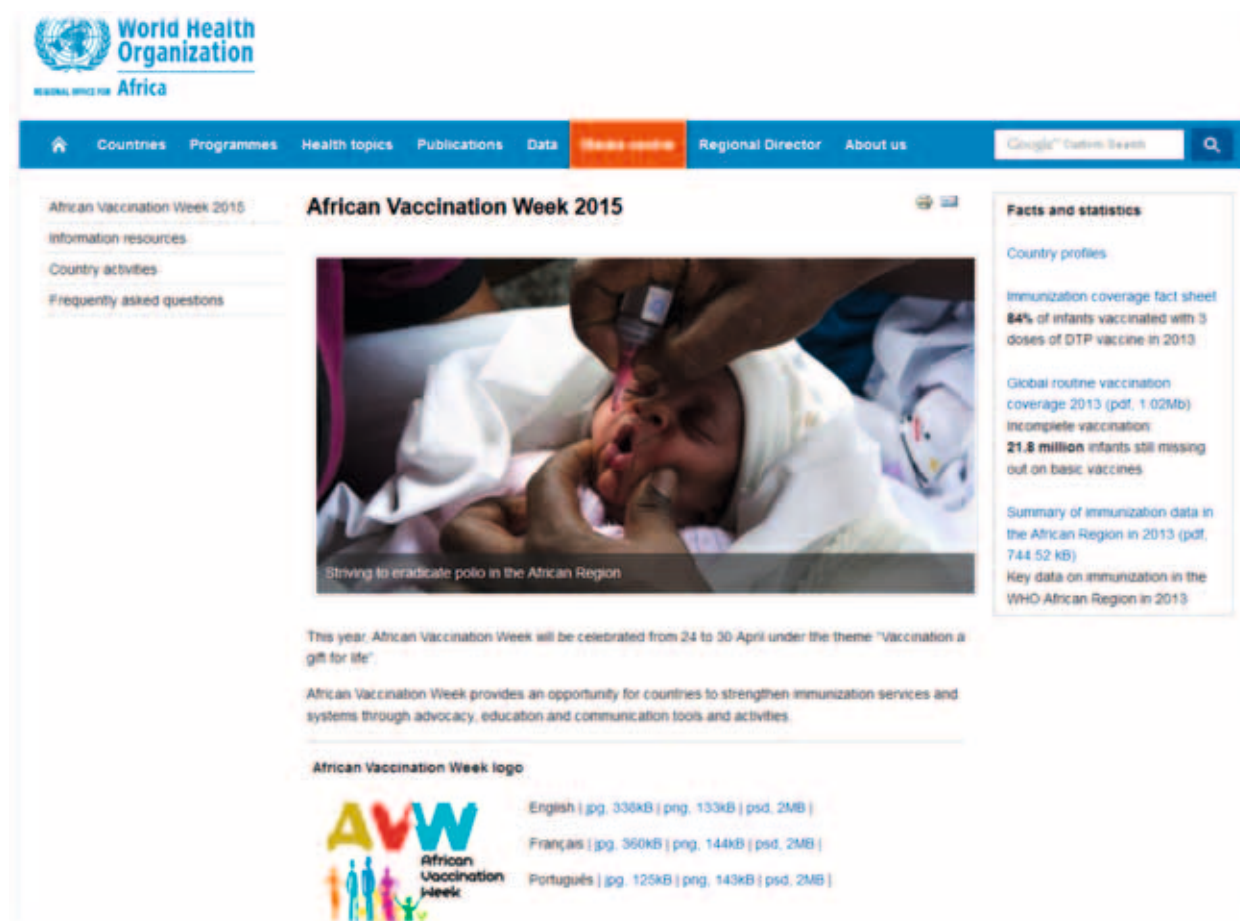
ONLINE COMMUNICATION

The WHO Regional Office for Africa website and Twitter account played a key role in communicating AVW 2015 to a global audience, building relationships and engaging stakeholders.

WEBSITE

The AVW 2015 website was designed and material related to the event was posted.

SOCIAL MEDIA: TWITTER CAMPAIGN



The screenshot shows the WHO African Vaccination Week 2015 website. The header includes the WHO logo and navigation menus for Countries, Programmes, Health topics, Publications, Data, **Events calendar**, Regional Director, and About us. A search bar is located on the right. The main content area features a large banner for African Vaccination Week 2015 with a photo of a baby being vaccinated and the text "Striving to eradicate polio in the African Region". Below the banner, there is a section for "Facts and statistics" with links to Country profiles, Immunization coverage fact sheet (84% of infants vaccinated with 3 doses of DTP vaccine in 2013), Global routine vaccination coverage: 2013 (pdf, 1.02Mb) Incomplete vaccination: 21.8 million infants still missing out on basic vaccines, Summary of immunization data in the African Region in 2013 (pdf, 744.52 kB), and Key data on immunization in the WHO African Region in 2013. At the bottom, there is a section for "African Vaccination Week logo" with download links for English (jpg, 336kB | png, 133kB | psd, 2MB), Français (jpg, 360kB | png, 144kB | psd, 2MB), and Português (jpg, 125kB | png, 143kB | psd, 2MB).

Tweets that were sent out with the Regional Office's Twitter account @WHOAFRO. Countries with social media accounts also participated in the social media campaign, with WHO Headquarters retweeting some of the material from the Region. At total of 65,583 twitter impressions were

Materials included:

- AVW logo which was available for downloading in different formats for use in production of campaign materials.
- posters
- frequently asked questions (FAQs) about AVW
- Regional Director's message
- regional press release and feature story
- country activities

A total of 3035 website hits to the African Vaccination Week website and related articles were recorded during April and May 2015. This will be used as a baseline figure for AVW 2016.

recorded. This represents the number of times Twitter users saw AVW related tweets from the @WHOAFRO account. The tweet from the feature story produced by the Regional Office was the most retweeted through collaboration with WHO Headquarters.

Feature story: **1 in 5 children in Africa do not have access to life-saving vaccines** <http://www.afro.who.int/en/media-centre/afro-feature/item/7620-1-in-5-children-in-africa-do-not-have-access-to-life-saving-vaccines.html>

Other tweets that were shared during AVW are featured in Annex 1.

TWEET ACTIVITY



Impressions	54,113
Total engagements	596
Photo or video clicks	201
Retweets	143
Detail expands	122
Favorites	61
Link clicks	32
Profile clicks	17
Follows	12
Replies	6
Hashtag clicks	2

COUNTRY ACTIVITIES

During African Vaccination Week 2015, countries engaged in several communication, social mobilization, community engagement and advocacy activities to raise awareness about African Vaccination Week and create demand for immunization and the high impact health interventions. These included:

- national launches attended by senior Government officials, community leaders, religious leaders, community members and partners
- press briefings
- press releases
- posters and leaflets

- radio, television, interviews and jingles
- print media articles and interviews
- speeches and statements
- promotional material distribution
- megaphone broadcasts
- skits
- websites and social media.

Community leaders and religious leaders played a key role in social mobilization and community engagement and were actively involved in planning and implementation of AVW activities.

A summary of some of the country communication activities as well as some tweets that were shared is provided in Annex 2.

3.0 CELEBRATION OF AVW 2015 IN COUNTRIES & BY SUB REGION

All countries in the African Region, except 4 (Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Gabon & Comoros) celebrated this year's AVW. The celebrations witnessed the

participation of high level authorities, local leaders and partners. Activities conducted in selected countries are described here under.

3.1 Central Africa (IST/Central)

ANGOLA

The AVW 2015 was launched on 24 April 2015. The opportunity was used to expand awareness and social commitment towards vaccination and the benefits of immunization. The country carried out activities in 32 priority municipalities in the 18 provinces in the country. Activities aimed to strengthen social mobilization efforts and public awareness campaigns to reach a targeted 479,796 children and mothers with life-saving vaccines.



A View of a team conducting outreach immunization activities during AVW 2015

This year, there was no formal launching ceremony, but various media targeted AVW activities. Ministry of Health representatives, WHO, UNICEF, Core Group and Angola Red Cross, as well as other partners, were engaged in increasing awareness and knowledge of vaccination importance and its role towards public health safety. Vaccination activities, which were coordinated at national level, were cascaded to the provincial level culminating in the district (health units) levels. Outcomes of activities include:

- expanded health care access to children and women of childbearing age;
- intensification of mass social mobilization activities;
- increased routine immunization with mobile and advanced teams;
- introduction of the hepatitis B birth dose vaccine in maternity health services; and
- raised awareness of the importance of measles vaccine second dose for children 15 months old.

CHAD



Secretary of state at MOH M Assane NGUEADOUM administering OPV to a child to kick off the event

AVW 2015 was officially launched in Kyabé in the Moyen-Chari Region. The event was chaired by the Secretary of State for Public Health, Mr Assane Ngueadoum and attended by Regional and local authorities and partners (WHO, UNICEF, of USA Embassy in Chad, the Red Cross of Chad, the Carter Center, and Rotary International, etc.).

Interventions delivered during the week included: Polio SIAs targeting 4,000,000 children 0 to 59 months coupled with vitamin A supplementation, deworming and accelerated immunization activities, and active search of Guinea worm cases. The package of activities were delivered in 23 regions.

CONGO



A view of the of the audience at the launching event in Pointe Noire, Congo

The launch of AVW 2105 was done in Pointe Noire under the chairmanship of the Director of Cabinet representing the Minister of Health and Population in the presence of the WHO Representative in Congo, the delegate from UNICEF, political and administrative authorities of the locality. Main activities of AVW 2015 included: immunization of children 6 to 59 months against measles, catch up of dropouts, vitamin A supplementation as well as organization of a symposium on immunization.

- phased introduction of IPV into the routine EPI,
- local NID's coupled with deworming and administration of vitamin A in the provinces of Bas-Congo, Equateur, Province Orientale, Katanga, North Kivu and Kinshasa.



WHO representative in Congo administering a vaccine at the launch event in Pointe Noire, Congo



Prime Minister carrying the baby receiving IPV administered by the MOH

In his speech, Dr Deo Nshimirimana, Acting WHO Representative in the DRC, stressed that the 2015 AVW together with local immunization days should be opportunities to consolidate the current achievements. "It is time that we make substantial and sustained investment in favour of strengthening the DRC's health system," he added.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO



A view of the of the audience at the launching event in in DRC

DRC has been polio-free since the end of 2011 but it was among the worst affected countries worldwide for many years. The year before DRC was declared polio-free, 93 AFP cases were recorded. The challenge now for the country is a weak health system necessitating increased routine immunization coverage against other diseases.

The official launch of AVW 2015 took place in the new health/maternity center of Mbankana (about 150 kms from Kinshasa). The Prime Minister, Mr Augustin Matata Ponyo, was the chair of the occasion. Also present at the launch were Mrs Anuradha Gupta, Deputy Executive Director of GAVI, the WHO and UNICEF representatives in the DRC and members of the political and administrative authorities in DRC. The three major activities implemented during AVW 2015 included:

- reception of the 34 health centres built and equipped by the Government,



PM with GAVI CEO listening to the MOH at launch of event in front of new health centre

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (CAR)



The Director of Cabinet, Mr Ghislain Kongbo, representing the Minister of Health, officially launched AVW on 24 April 2015 in SIBUT. Present at the launch were the prefect of the locality, political and traditional authorities and representatives of WHO and UNICEF in CAR. Activities conducted during this week included advocacy with health partners such as HTC and OCHA, awareness in the media and the organization of integrated Polio SIA in the three health regions RS 4, 5 and 6.

BURUNDI

The official launch of AVW 2015 was held in Gashoho by the Second Vice-President of the Republic in the presence of the Minister of Health, partners of the United Nations system (WHO and UNICEF), bilateral and multilateral partners, NGOs and civil society, Members of Parliament from the province of Muyinga. AVW 2015 was co-implemented with the 1st round of the Mother Child Health Week integrating the following interventions:

- administration of vitamin A to children aged 6 to 59 months
- deworming with albendazole of children aged 1 to 14 years and pregnant women
- catch up immunization activities for children 18 to 23 months for measles second dose
- micronutrient supplementation for children aged 6 to 23 months in two provinces

- collection of blood to save mothers with complications during delivery and anaemic children
- sensitization of parents or guardians on the importance of integrated mother-child health book and importance of Early Prenatal Consultation.



EQUATORIAL GUINEA

AVW 2015 was coupled with the national immunization campaign against polio, targeting around 170 000 children under 5 years of age. The launch occurred on 7 May 2015 in Malabo by the first lady of the country, Mrs Constanca Mangué de Obiang.



1st lady in Equatorial guinea launching the event

3.2 East and Southern Africa (IST/East & South)

ETHIOPIA

The 5th annual African Vaccination Week was launched in Ethiopia on 21 April 2015 with a media briefing and vaccination messages, nationally as well as in the regions, to intensify vaccination activities for the protection of children against diseases.



Dr. Pierre MPELE-KILEBOU, WHO Representative in Ethiopia vaccinating a child during AVW launch in Afar region

On 23 April 2015, the celebration continued with a colourful launch in Semera town in Afar Region with the participation of Regional Vice-President, Honorable AwelArba, the World Health Organization Representative for Ethiopia, Dr Pierre MPELE-KILEBOU, Dr EframTekele, MCH, Directorate Director and other staff from the Ministry of Health. During the event, the Ethiopian Government, partners and the community renewed and reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening immunization coverage so that not a single child is missed.

All regions except Addis Ababa observed the week by doing social mobilization, infant registration, defaulter tracing and providing routine immunization antigens. There was also a live TV panel meeting discussing the objective of celebrating AVW and informing the public on the importance of routine immunization and the need to complete all vaccination as per the national schedule.

Major activities conducted during the AVW in Ethiopia included:

- reviewing region specific RI coverage to facilitate logistic supplies

- mobilizing local financial resources for implementation of routine immunization improvement plan
- hosting an advocacy meeting and visit on revitalization routine immunization (Afar Region)
- launching in regional capitals or priority sites
- hosting a Woreda Level Health Sensitization Workshop
- implementation of a mechanism for hard-to-reach communities
- conducting routine immunization activities in all zones, Woredas and health facilities, especially those having large number of unimmunized children
- providing supportive supervision activities during AVW.

KENYA

Kenya commemorated AVW 2015 with a national launch and press briefing in Nairobi Kenya on 27 April 2015. It involved various activities and partners such as the World Health Organization, UNICEF, CDC, Hennet (the local health NGOs network), and others.

WHO Country Representative Dr Custodia Mandlhate, Cabinet Secretary Mr James Macharia, UNICEF Acting Director Dr Pirkko Heinonen, Senior MOH personnel, goodwill immunization ambassador Senator Harold Kipchumba, among others attended the media session. The event was also used to launch the Kenya Immunization Technical Advisory Group, KENITAG.

Some counties organized community meetings on immunization with stakeholders. In Garissa, North Eastern region, a meeting targeting EPI managers from the county and education officers of the child-to-child immunization project was held. The meeting focused on immunization and the urgent need to improve coverage. In West Pokot, a radio programme on immunization was aired and listeners called in to ask questions.



MALAWI



A health worker vaccinating a child during outreach strategy

Malawi celebrated AVW 2015 from 24 to 30 April 2015. Activities conducted included mobilization and sensitization campaigns with dissemination of messages (through health talks, radio, newspaper and television) to the general public on the importance of immunizing children against childhood illnesses and the value of immunization. There was also catch up immunization activities.

RWANDA

Rwanda celebrated AVW 2015 from 30 March to 3 April at the same time as the first round of Maternal and Child Health Week. The launch of MCH Week was conducted in Bugesera District/Eastern Province, one of the districts with high burden of malaria. The guest of honour was the Minister of State in charge of Public Health and Primary Health Care at the Ministry of Health. All districts also took the opportunity to launch the event in their respective localities.

Interventions delivered during AVW included:

- catch up immunization activities for children from 0 to 23 months of age
- vaccination of measles and polio for asylum seekers from Burundi
- HPV vaccination for adolescent girls aged 12 years old
- hepatitis B vaccination to CHWs, their partners, the hotel's and hygiene company's staff in health facilities
- distribution of Vitamin A to all children between 6 and 59 months of age
- deworming with mebendazole/ albendazole for children 1-15 years of age
- distribution of mosquito nets in 13 district hospitals with high burden of malaria, sensitization on appropriate use of bed nets and on environmental hygiene for malaria prevention.

Innovations used to access hard-to-reach children with interventions included: community health workers contributed to mobilizing the population before and during the AVW, especially mothers and children. There was a site to vaccinate adolescent girls against human papilloma virus in each primary school. Rwanda radio and 5 community radio stations were used to inform the population about the planned AVW interventions, the targeted groups and the areas to get the provided interventions.

SOUTH SUDAN

African Vaccination Week in South Sudan focused on creating awareness and filling some of the gaps in routine immunization. Immunization is very low at less than 40% of fully immunized children. This means most children are not safe from a list of preventable diseases such as polio, measles, tetanus and more.



Access to health care services in South Sudan is low and the Ministry of Health with support from WHO, UNICEF and other partners are trying to increase the awareness, importance and knowledge of the benefits of access to health care from community health centres and health facilities. South Sudan celebrated five years of being polio free in June 2014. Maintaining this polio-free status and being free of other vaccine-preventable diseases requires vigilance as well as reaching all with effective vaccines to ensure protection.

AVW 2015 provided another opportunity to increase awareness and encourage all to take up their responsibility in promoting immunization services and ensuring adequate uptake of these services. In the protection of civilians (PoC) camps on the outskirts of Juba, special vaccination posts for the African Vaccination Week provided immunization services together with other life-saving interventions.

SEYCHELLES

Seychelles celebrated African Vaccination Week 2015 from 24 to 30 April 2015. This year's commemoration focused more on raising awareness and reinforced immunization health messages to various target groups, with the objective of further strengthening immunization programmes and coverage in the country.

The Minister of Health, Honourable Mitcy Larue, released her AVW message on national media, where she stressed the importance for each and every child in the Seychelles to be vaccinated. In her message, she talked of how well Seychelles is doing in maintaining very high immunization coverage against the 11 killer diseases, whilst remaining committed to introducing more vaccine into the routine immunization schedule. Nonetheless, the Minister said that one challenge facing the country is with regards to convincing a small number of parents who are still choosing not to have their children vaccinated because of their religious beliefs. Minister Larue took the opportunity to make a special appeal to those few parents and asked them to rethink their decision, to appreciate the health benefits of immunization and to get their child fully vaccinated.

Live radio interviews also provided a forum for further sensitization on the benefits of vaccination. Health talks and exhibitions for various target groups were organized at community level throughout the week on the three main islands, Mahe, Praslin and La Digue.



EPI staff of six district health centres took the opportunity to focus on tracing and administering of TT vaccine to secondary schools students who had not yet taken their TT vaccine at 15 years. Administration of TT vaccine also took place at various work places, including the Special Support Unit of the Seychelles Police. A sensitization session on the introduction of the Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV) and on the 'Switch' in early May 2015 were also organized for medical practitioners.

UGANDA



The national commemoration of AVW 2015 was held in Kween district, eastern Uganda, which is one of the districts with poor immunization indicators. It was thus an opportunity to raise awareness about the importance of immunization in this district. The Chairperson of Kween District Local Council, Hon. Paul Machijan, who was the guest of honour urged his people to embrace immunization, which is a sure way to guarantee good health for all people, particularly children. He reiterated the government's commitment to support immunization and fight poverty noting that fighting diseases was crucial in ensuring that people were healthy and able to work for social and economic development of the country. WHO & UNICEF representatives called on parents and guardians to immunize their children early and adhere to the immunization schedule.



3.3 West Africa (IST/West)

GUINEA BISSAU

Dr Malu Domingos, the Secretary of State for hospital administration, representing the Minister of Health, launched African Vaccination Week (AVW) 2015. The launch was attended by the WHO representative, Dr Ayigan Kossi, and the Director General of Health, among others.



In his speech, Dr Domingos emphasized the importance of immunization in the prevention of diseases and deaths, but also reminded the government about the commitment made in Malabo during the Sixtieth session of the WHO Regional Committee for Africa to institutionalize the annual celebration of Vaccination Week. He appealed to all parents and guardians to participate in both outreach activities and the dissemination of messages in the communities for the protection of children.



WHO Representative in Guinea Bissau, Dr. Ayigan Kossi delivering his speech

MALI

African Vaccination Week 2015 was launched on 24 April 2015 in the WHO conference room under the chairmanship of communication adviser of the Minister of Health and Public Hygiene, Mr Daou Makatié. Present at the occasion was the WHO advisor for immunization, Dr Baba Tounkara, representatives from the Lions Club, the National Information Centre for Health Communications, among others. Journalists and the network of health communicators also participated.

Throughout the week and beyond, the national authorities conducted several activities on communication and social mobilization including educational activities to raise public awareness on the benefits of immunization. Announcements were made in newspapers, micro programmes were broadcast, and posters, immunization schedule and flyers were distributed in health centres.



GHANA

Ghana's Ministry of Health and Ghana Health Service with the support from WHO and partners officially launched the African Vaccination Week 2015 with a media briefing.



On Thursday 23 April, Dr George Bonsu, the national EPI Manager addressed the media to commemorate African Vaccination and Child Health Promotion Week 2015. He highlighted the fact that Ghana had not documented deaths due to measles since 2003 and has been free from polio since 2008. Cases of pneumonia and diarrhoea in children have also reduced drastically.

He further indicated that two vaccines would be introduced as part of the routine immunization services; the inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) and meningococcal A conjugate vaccine (MenAfriVac) in September 2015, and January 2016 respectively.



All these achievements have contributed to the reduction of under-five mortality from 111 per 1000 live births in 2003 to 60 per 1000 live births in 2014, according to the last Ghana Demographic Health Survey.

Dr Magda Robalo, WHO Country Representative in Ghana, in a speech read on her behalf by Mr Stanley Diamenu, EPI Officer at WCO said 3 million children under five years of age died each year in Africa from preventable vaccine diseases. AVW is important because it offers a second opportunity to children who could not complete their schedule or missed their chance during the routine immunization programme. WHO would continue to support the government to strengthen the health system, in order to attain universal health coverage, as well as protect fundamental human right to health for all.

Dr Gloria Quansah-Asare, Deputy Director-General of GHS, who presided, commended the health personnel for the tremendous efforts in achieving these successes. She urged regional and district coordinating councils, traditional and religious leaders, as well as communities, to take active part in all activities to promote the health and well-being of the children.

She added that AVW activities should serve as a platform to renewing national efforts to accelerate actions to increase awareness and demand for immunization.

SIERRA LEONE

The Ebola outbreak in Sierra Leone has been devastating in terms of human and financial loss but it has also weakened basic and essential health services, undermining trust, and creating restrictions on regular health campaigns.

Despite the unprecedented challenges of delivering basic health services in an Ebola emergency, Sierra Leone held its first public immunization and health campaign from 25 to 20 April 2015 targeting an estimated 1.5 million children under 5 with life-saving interventions.

The national Maternal and Child Health Week campaign ('Mami en Pikin Welbodi Week') – part of the World and Africa Vaccination Week – aimed at reaching all children aged 6-59 months with malnutrition assessment, the vaccination of 0-23 month old children that have missed or defaulted from routine immunization schedules, the administration of Vitamin A and deworming tablets, as well as HIV testing for pregnant women and their partners.



For the campaign, jingles and radio discussions were aired on various radio stations in the country. A press release on Maternal Child Health Week (MCHW) and African Vaccination Week (AVW) campaign was jointly issued by MOHS, WHO and UNICEF. Advocacy meetings were held with stakeholders in the districts. Town criers were used in chiefdoms to pass the message and sensitize their communities. Around 3600 teams were deployed across the country, with more than 10 700 vaccinators and distributors going door-to-door.

A campaign statement was delivered on radio and television by the Minister of Health and Sanitation. In Bo district, the campaign was officially launched in Koribondo on 25 April together with the World Malaria Day celebration.



NIGERIA

Nigeria like most countries in the African Region commemorated AVW 2015 from 24 to 30 April 2015. The week-long event was preceded by planning activities which started six weeks prior to the scheduled implementation of various activities all over the country. This year's AVW coincided with the implementation of the Polio National Immunization Plus Days (NIPDs) and most states took advantage of the event to sensitize communities about the benefits of immunization.



The strategy for AVW 2015 was to boost the population immunity of over 14 000 internally displaced populations (IDPs) through outreach services (immunization integrated with child survival) using health camps where integrated health services have been provided. This is mainly due to high population movements, especially people from the north-east fleeing the security situation in the region.

The event kicked off with a national media briefing by the National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA), during which the WHO Country Representative, Dr Rui Gama Vaz, and the Executive Director (ED) of NPHCDA, Dr Ado Muhammed, explained the benefits of immunization and encouraged caregivers and stakeholders to see immunization as everybody's business. The ED used the occasion to reveal the federal government's resolve to develop indigenous vaccines in order to reduce the cost of immunization. <http://www.voiceofnigeria.org/nigeria/african-vaccination-week-nigeria-seeks-more-funding-for-vaccination.html>.

Dr Rui, who spoke on behalf of partners, congratulated the Federal Ministry of Health and the NPHCDA and announced that on 24 April 2015, Nigeria would reach nine months without any report of wild poliovirus. <http://www.channelstv.com/2015/04/23/who-commends-nigeria-for-interrupting-polio-transmission/> This is an important milestone for the country and for the African Region but they should not become complacent.

In Kaduna, AVW was also celebrated by Journalists Against Polio (JAP) who visited non-compliant communities in the state to sensitize them about the benefits of immunization. JAP organized some media activities that included radio discussion programmes in Hausa and English languages.

4.0 ACHIEVEMENTS

4.1 Overview of interventions delivered during AVW 2015 in the African Region

Although AVW is officially only a one-week event, some countries celebrated the event after the official period. As a reference, the AVW vaccination and communication activities were consolidated into broad categories and listed by countries. All

participating countries reported on their activities and the interventions delivered. The latter ranging from health education and counselling to administration of various vaccine antigens and supply of health commodities were undertaken. See details in Table 2.

Table 2: Results of Immunization & other life-saving interventions

Interventions during AVW 2015	Results obtained	Countries
Polio campaigns	21 475 000 doses of OPV administered in 6 countries	Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, DRC, Equatorial Guinea & Madagascar
Catch-up vaccination activities	Nearly 3 million doses of vaccines of all antigens administered in 20 countries to catch up defaulter	Angola, Benin, Burundi, Botswana, Cameroon, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Congo, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Guinea, , Madagascar, Malawi, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Sudan, Swaziland, Sao Tome, SIL, Togo
Vitamin A administration	Approximately 21.3 million capsules of vitamin A distributed to children < 5 years & women in post-partum in 11 countries	Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, DRC, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Malawi, Rwanda, Swaziland
Deworming tablets	Around 25 million deworming tablets were distributed to children <5 years and pregnant women in 8 countries	Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, DRC, Madagascar, Malawi, Rwanda, Swaziland
Malnutrition screening	Around 1 million children <5 years screened for malnutrition in 3 countries	Cameroon, Madagascar, Nigeria.
Micronutrient distribution	~68,00 iron & folic acid tablets distributed to pregnant women in one country	Burundi
Distribution of LLITN	Approximately 1 200 520 LLITN distributed in one country	Rwanda
Distribution of family planning devices	~135 000 women counselled on HIV in one country	Sierra Leone
Birth registration	1701 bags of blood collected in one country	Burundi

ANNEX: EXAMPLE OF COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES DELIVERED DURING AVW 2015

Annex 1: Some tweets shared during 5th AVW

REGIONAL LAUNCH



The first lady of Zambia launched AVW in Lusaka. This was the Regional launch



AVW activities were organised in close collaboration with UNICEF and partners



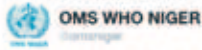
COUNTRY ACTIVITIES



WHO Ethiopia was actively engaged in the campaign on the ground and online using social media



Vitamin A supplementation, one of the key health interventions offered during AVW



Méningite au Niger: Vaccination d'un élève par le Représentant de l'OMS devant le 1er ministre du Niger.



3

10:21 AM - 24 Apr 2015

Niger held a meningitis vaccination campaign



"Vaccination a gift for life". Immunise a child, save a life.



16

15

1:34 PM - 27 Apr 2015

UNICEF Uganda, Ministry of Health UG, UG in Uganda and 2 others

WHO Uganda and Ministry of Health Uganda actively participated in the social media campaign using Twitter



Annex 2: Summary of some of the country communication activities delivered during AVW 2015

Country	Media communication, information for action, social mobilization and community engagement
Angola	<p>Round table discussions, debates and daily interviews were organized by the main radio stations, TV channels and newspapers focusing on the collective efforts to ensure vaccination for every child, wherever they are living.</p> <p>Wide dissemination of radio and video spots.</p> <p>Among the radio and TV stations participating in the national efforts were: LAC Radio, Radio Ecclesia, More Radio and Radio School and the TV Zimbo, as well as programmes in national languages.</p> <p>WHO Angola provided support to produce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8000 Leaflets • 4000 Posters • 1 Radio and 1 TV Spot which were aired by radios and TV stations at country level <p>Press release produced and disseminated.</p>
CAR	<p>Media coverage of national launch in Sibut.</p> <p>Skits on importance of immunization.</p> <p>Press release produced and disseminated.</p>
Chad	<p>Media coverage of launch launched in Kyabé, in the region of Moyen-Chari.</p> <p>Press release was produced and disseminated.</p>
DRC	<p>Media coverage of launch by the Prime Minister Augustin Matata Ponyo at a new health centre in Mbankana (Maluku Health Zone II).</p> <p>Press release was produced and disseminated.</p>
Eritrea	<p>Media coverage of launch ceremony in Asmara, attended by EPI coordinators, health promoters and partners both from and outside of Ministry of Health.</p> <p>Media based advocacy was conducted through the national radio and TV outlets for five days, starting two days ahead of the launch of the campaign (21 April 2015).</p> <p>Technical Committees were formed at national and subnational level to facilitate effective advocacy, social mobilization and communication.</p> <p>Activities planned and implemented ensuring support and participation of families, caregivers and communities.</p> <p>At community level, sub-zone administrators, village community leaders and religious leaders took a leading role in the mobilization of communities.</p> <p>Community leaders alerted people in their respective communities, using megaphones.</p>
Ethiopia	<p>Media coverage of launch in Afar Region, Ethiopia.</p> <p>The launch event was covered by local newspapers and a WHO Ethiopia press release was produced.</p> <p>WHO Ethiopia Twitter and Facebook were used to share information about the AVW 2015 launch and related events. Tweets were retweeted by WHO HQ and WHO AFRO.</p> <p>A professional cameraman was engaged to cover the events and captured images were used on the website and social media depicting pictures of communities, the community leadership structure, and the health development workforce serving families/households.</p> <p>A journalist travelled with WHO to Afar to cover the official launching of the fifth annual AVW.</p>

Country	Media communication, information for action, social mobilization and community engagement
Guinea-Bissau	<p>Regional launch media coverage.</p> <p>Press released produced and distributed.</p>
Kenya	<p>Interviews/press conversations were aired on 4 radio stations on the day.</p> <p>Coverage of the national launch.</p> <p>Media Q&A session.</p> <p>Three articles published in three national newspapers.</p> <p>Press release was produced and disseminated.</p>
Mauritania	<p>Coverage of the launch ceremony at the Tarhil health centre in Nouadhibou (the economic capital) Wilaya Dakhlet Nouadhibou.</p> <p>A sensitization workshop for health staff and local journalists was organized.</p> <p>Press release was produced and disseminated.</p>
Mali	<p>Launch event was covered by newspapers as well as radio, national TV and online press.</p> <p>Press release was produced and disseminated.</p> <p>Public and private radio and national television broadcasts.</p> <p>Education awareness activities for the public about the benefits of vaccination.</p> <p>Newspaper inserts.</p> <p>Megaphone broadcasts.</p> <p>Campaign clothing.</p> <p>Posters.</p> <p>Animation sessions / skits.</p>
Nigeria	<p>National media briefing by the National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA) was held, during which the WHO Representative, Dr Rui Gama Vaz, and the Executive Director (ED) of NPHCDA, Dr Ado Muhammed, explained the benefits of immunization and encouraged caregivers, stakeholders to see immunization as everybody's business.</p> <p>In Kaduna, AVW was celebrated by Journalists Against Polio (JAP) who visited non-compliant communities in the state to sensitize them about the benefits of immunization.</p> <p>JAP also organized some media activities that included radio discussion programmes in Hausa and English languages.</p> <p>Throughout April there were radio and TV jingles, emphasizing the importance of immunization and encouraging caregivers to take their children to the nearest immunization clinic.</p> <p>To create ownership of the AVW event and form partnerships, an advocacy meeting with various immunization stakeholders that included the Nigeria Emergency Management Agency, Sir Emeka Ofor Foundation, Pharmaceutical Society of Nigeria FCT (PSN-FCT, National Association of Nigeria Paediatric Nurses, FCT Primary Health Care Development Board, Nigeria Medical Association NMA/Association of General & Private Medical Practitioners of Nigeria, Christian Association of Nigeria was held.</p> <p>A traditional leader in Edo state, the Queen Mother (ESON) distributed cups to women and children during the launch of AVW in the state and went on to sensitize market women in Santana market in Benin City.</p>

Country	Media communication, information for action, social mobilization and community engagement
Sierra Leone	<p>A campaign statement was delivered on radio and television by the Minister of Health and Sanitation on 23 /24 April 2015.</p> <p>In Bo district, the campaign was officially launched in Koribondo on Saturday 25 April together with the World Malaria Day celebration.</p> <p>Jingles and radio discussions were aired on various radio stations.</p> <p>A press release on Maternal Child Health Week (MCHW) and African Vaccination Week (AVW) campaign was jointly done by MOHS, WHO and UNICEF.</p> <p>Advocacy meetings were held with stakeholders in the districts.</p> <p>Town criers facilitated the passing on of the message and sensitizing their communities.</p>
Seychelles	<p>Minister of Health, Honourable Mityc Larue, released her AVW message on national media, where she stressed on the importance for each and every child in the Seychelles to be vaccinated.</p> <p>Radio interviews on national media conducted by the EPI programme of the Ministry of Health on the 24th of April on Pure FM radio and on the 30th April, on the SBC radio.</p> <p>Live radio interviews provided a forum for further sensitization on the African Vaccination Week and on the benefits of vaccination.</p> <p>Health talks and exhibitions for various target groups were also organized at community level throughout the week on the three main islands, Mahe, Praslin and Lad Digue.</p>
Swaziland	<p>Media coverage of the launch was attended by local traditional leaders, regional health management teams, health workers and community members.</p> <p>Press release was produced and disseminated.</p> <p>All stakeholders for child health at national and community levels were involved in the planning and implementation of activities emphasising community engagement and participation.</p> <p>Health education on vaccination, sanitation, hand washing, diarrhoea prevention and control was provided at the launch ceremonies.</p> <p>During the week, health messages were disseminated through the distribution of IEC materials, mass media campaigns and interpersonal communication.</p>
Uganda	<p>Media coverage of launch at Kween.</p> <p>High mobilization for immunization was demonstrated by a large number of district, religious and cultural leaders as well as all community members who attended the function.</p> <p>Government officials, the UN family, civil society organizations and implementing partners also attended the event.</p> <p>Social mobilization for immunization services, visits to rural health centres for support supervision and advocacy meetings with leaders and implementing partners from various districts.</p>
Zambia	<p>Media coverage of regional launch by the first lady in Lusaka.</p> <p>Press release produced and disseminated.</p>

Vaccination, a gift for life

