

CIVIL SOCIETY DECLARATION FOR EQUITABLE ACCESS TO IMMUNIZATION IN AFRICA

We, the undersigned civil society organizations and platforms, recognize the essential value of immunization in saving millions of lives around the world, including millions on the African continent. Immunization has been critical in ensuring health and well-being in Africa, including as a major contributor to the reduction in child deaths in Africa by more than half between 1990 and 2012. Immunizations are also a significant driver of economic growth, and strong immunization programs are a cornerstone of the robust universal health systems critical to helping countries achieve their economic and development goals.

One of the most successful and cost-effective public health interventions, immunization programs globally have saved the lives of more than thirty million children in the last 15 years alone according to the World Health Organization. Recognizing the critical role and impact of immunization, the global health community, in partnership with World Health Organization, declared the period of 2011-2020 the “Decade of Vaccines” and established a vision to accelerate the public health impact of global vaccination by 2020: the Global Vaccines Action Plan, ratified by 194 United Nations member states.

Impressive progress has been made over the last decade in improving immunization coverage across the region, including the remarkable elimination of transmission of wild poliovirus. However, this progress has recently stagnated and the key targets of the Global Vaccine Action Plan remain off-track; we are not making the progress we should to achieve these critically important goals, with only one target achieved by 2015 interim measures. The Sustainable Development Goals call for ending preventable deaths of newborns and children under five years and this can only be achieved through full and timely access to immunization and other essential health services.

Despite efforts made so far by governments and the international community, one in five children in the region still do not have access to basic immunization services and the number of deaths from vaccine-preventable illnesses remains extremely high. Over one and a half million deaths in children every year could be prevented if they had access to immunization services.ⁱ Immunization and health systems need to be strengthened to ensure universal access. This requires strong commitment and action, alongside sufficient and sustainable financing to drive change. Governments are the primary duty-bearers, responsible for providing universal health coverage and ensuring the health of all citizens.

We call on the governments of all countries present here at the first-ever Ministerial Conference on Immunization in Africa, and across the region, to commit themselves to:

1. Ensure that all residents of their country, especially the poorest and most marginalised, have access to immunization and other essential health services to attain universal immunization coverage goals by 2020;
2. Strengthen health systems that deliver immunization services, especially through ensuring a strong health workforce in reach of all communities, sufficient and sustainable financing, and a strong supply chain for uninterrupted purchase and delivery of vaccines in sufficient quantity to meet the population’s needs through increasing the national budget dedicated to health by 2020;

i. WHO statistics, 2008. http://www.who.int/immunization/monitoring_surveillance/burden/estimates/en/

3. Ensure that no financial barrier prevents a child from accessing life-saving vaccinations by committing to and implementing universal health coverage policies;
4. Adopt lessons learned from the effort to eradicate polio from the continent, and ensure that the investment in polio eradication is effectively leveraged to support immunization and other health goals ;
5. Reach all six of the targets agreed to under the Global Vaccines Action Plan by 2020, including achieving full coverage of the Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (DTP3) vaccine and all vaccines in national immunization programs;
6. Engage and support civil society to contribute to the reduction of immunization inequity, including by raising community awareness and public demand for immunization programs.

We, the undersigned civil society groups, pledge to take action on bridging the gap on immunization, utilizing our unique capacity as civil society to forge connections between communities, health services, and the governments responsible to those communities. Our contribution is to:

1. Support government efforts in delivering vaccination, ensuring that these services reach communities in hard-to-reach locations and marginalized communities;
2. Support efforts to increase the acceptability and uptake of vaccines in these communities through demand creation activities;
3. Deliver immunization services in emergency and crisis contexts where appropriate;
4. Assist governments to improve the performance and management of the systems that deliver vaccination;
5. Participate in the elaboration, implementation, and monitoring of health and immunisation policies;
6. Hold governments accountable to deliver the immunization services needed by their entire populations, especially the poorest and most marginalized members of society;
7. Raise the voice of communities by supporting and empowering them to participate in immunization processes and accountability mechanisms; and
8. Hold donor country governments and multilateral institutions accountable to fulfil the pledges they have made to deliver funding and support for immunization and ensure this is aligned with national health plans and priorities.

ENDORISING ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDE:

*as of 22nd March, 2016

ACTION global health advocacy partnership	CVD-Mali
Action Now Kenya	Daawah Coordination Council of Nigeria
African Health Economics and Policy Association	Ethiopia Civil Society Health Forum
African Youth Initiative on Population, Health and Development	Federation of Muslim Women Associations of Nigeria
Afrihealth Group	FOR IMPACTS IN SOCIAL HEALTH
Afrihealth Optonet Association	Foundation for Family Values, Health Orientation and Empowerment
AGENCE DE MEDECINE PREVENTIVE	Foundation Joseph the Worker
ALBUSSHER FOUNDATION, PAKISTAN	Future Generations International Ghana
ALEJO Community Support Project	Ghana Health Nest
Alternative Santé Cameroun	Global Community in Action
American Academy of Pediatrics	Global Health Advocates France
American Cancer Society	Grandmothers Advocacy Network
Association for the Advancement of Family Planning	Health NGOs Network, Kenya
Center for Law and Policy Affairs	Health Reform Foundation of Nigeria
Champions for Maternal Health	Health Systems and Development Initiative
Christian Health Association of Nigeria	ICHANGE Cote d'Ivoire
Churches Health Association of Zambia	IMA World Health
Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre	Integrated Development in Focus
CLUB DES AMIS DU MONDE	Integrated Pediatric Association
Coalition 15%	International AIDS Vaccine Initiative
Coalition on Vaccines, Vitamins and Immunizations for all Nigerians	International Interfaith Peace Corps
Community Health and Research Initiative	International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease
Concern Health Education Project	International Vaccine Access Center
Confederation of Meningitis Organisations	John Snow, Inc
Core Group Polio Project, Ethiopia	Kenya Aids NGOs Consortium
CORE Group Polio Project, India	KVS International
CORE Group Polio Project, USA	Mathiwos Wondu-YeEthiopia Cancer Society

Meningitis Research Foundation
Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Gambia
National Empowerment Network of people
living with HIV/AIDS in Kenya
Nigeria Association of Women Journalists
One Campaign
ORGANISATION D'AFRIQUE FRANCOPHONE
POUR LE RENFORCEMENT DES SYSTEMES DE
SANTE ET DA LA VACCINATION
PATH
Peace League Africa
Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon
PLATE FORME DES ORGANISATIONS DE LA
SOCIETE CIVILE POUR LE SOUTIEN A LA SANTE
ET DE LA VACCINATION
PLATE FORME DES OSC POUR LA PROMOTION
DE LA VACCINATION ET LE RENFORCEMENT DU
SYSTEME DE SANTE AU CAMEROUN
Polio Survivors Rotarian Action Group
RESEAU DES PLATES FORMES D'ONG D'AFRIQUE
DE L'OUEST ET DU CENTRE
RESULTS Canada
RESULTS UK
Rotary International
Save the Children
Socio Economic Research and Development
Centre
SOINS DE SANTE PRIMAIRES EN MILIEU RURAL
ET URBAIN
State of the Union Coalition, Kenya
The Gavi CSO Constituency Steering Committee
The Global Poverty Project

Treasureland Health Builders Initiative
Union of National African Paediatric Societies
and Associations
USAID's flagship Maternal and Child Survival
Program
Vaccine Network for Disease Control
Vital Strategies
West African Academy of Public Health
Women Advocate for Vaccine Access
World Vision International
YOUTH ACHIEVERS ORGANIZATION