

2023/2024

ANNUAL REPORT

WHO ZAMBIA

**PROMOTE
HEALTH**

**KEEP THE
WORLD
SAFE**



**SERVE THE
VULNERABLE**

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Acronyms

AEFI	Adverse Events Following Immunization
ANC	Antenatal Care
APHEF	Africa Public Health Emergency Fund
BI	Behavioural Insights
bOPV	Bivalent Oral Polio Vaccine
CCS	Country Cooperation Strategy
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CTCs	Cholera Treatment Centers
CVCA	Core Voluntary Contributions Account
DHIS2	District Health Information System 2
FCTC	Framework Convention on Tobacco Control
GEM	Gender Equality Marker
GDO	Global Dementia Observatory
GDHI	Global Digital Health Initiative
GPACCM	Global Platform for Access to Childhood Cancer Medicines
GPW	General Programme of Work
GYTS	Global Youth Tobacco Survey
IPV2	Inactivated Polio Vaccine (second dose)
MoH	Ministry of Health
NHSP	National Health Strategic Plan
UHC	Universal Health Coverage
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
WCO	WHO Country Office
WHO	World Health Organization

Foreword

The 2023/2024 reporting period has been one of resilience, innovation, and collective resolve for the WHO Country Office in Zambia. Our annual report highlights significant strides in advancing health outcomes and promoting well-being across the country, despite challenges posed by global and local health crises.

Guided by the WHO General Programme of Work, Zambia's National Health Strategic Plan, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, our efforts have centered on supporting the government to protect lives, strengthen health systems, and improve service delivery. Through these strategic partnerships, we have fostered integrated approaches to health—linking prevention with response, capacity building with policy reform, and local action with global best practices.

In the reporting period, we have witnessed the remarkable adaptability of Zambia's health system—its capacity to pivot from responding to a major cholera outbreak to restoring essential services; to engaging communities in lifesaving behavior change; and from managing disease threats to addressing noncommunicable conditions, mental health, and health security. Our collaboration with the Ministry of Health (MoH) and other stakeholders has made it possible to reach communities with timely interventions while laying the groundwork for long-term system transformation.

Importantly, this report reflects not only outputs and milestones but also the strength of multisectoral action. From digital health innovations to gender-responsive programming and from decentralized emergency responses to national policy reforms, the milestones of the work captured here affirms our shared commitment to achieving Universal Health Coverage and health equity for all Zambians.

I extend my sincere gratitude to our government counterparts, implementing partners, donors, and WHO staff for their tireless efforts and unwavering dedication. As we look ahead, WHO remains committed to supporting Zambia in addressing future health challenges, sustaining health gains, and building a more resilient, inclusive, and people-centered health system.



Dr. Nathan Bakyaia

WHO Representative to Zambia

About Zambia



Population
19.6 Million



Life Expectancy
62.1 Years

Zambia's Health Status

In 2023, Zambia made notable progress in several key health indicators, despite facing persistent systemic challenges. The country **achieved a 95% rate of deliveries attended by skilled personnel**, surpassing national targets and reflecting improvements in maternal health services. Efforts to expand access to healthcare continued through infrastructure development and the recruitment of additional health workers, ensuring that all health facilities had at least one qualified staff member. However, the year was also marked by a resurgence of communicable diseases, including a significant cholera outbreak that began in October and spread rapidly across nine provinces.

In 2024, Zambia's health sector focused on strengthening resilience and emergency response capacity. The government increased its **health budget to K20.9 billion**, representing **11%** of the national budget, and aimed to **recruit 4,000 additional health workers**. The cholera outbreak, which escalated in early 2024, became one of the worst in two decades, with over 14,000 confirmed cases and a case fatality rate nearing 4%—well above the emergency threshold.

The response to the outbreak included multi-sectoral efforts in health, nutrition, and WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene), supported by emergency funding from CERF and coordinated by WHO and partners. Despite these challenges, Zambia's commitment to Universal Health Coverage and health system strengthening remained evident through continued investments and policy reforms.

Strategic Approach

The World Health Organization country office (WCO) work is guided by the Country Cooperation Strategy (CCS) 2024 -2027 which outlines the five priority areas of work in line with the overall WHO General Programme of Work (GPW13/14), the National Health Strategic Plan (NHSP 2021 -2026), the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF 2023 -2027).

All our work with the government and partners aims to address health and health related sustainable development goals (SDGs).



FIVE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES OF THE WHO ZAMBIA CCS

1

Build health system capacities to achieve and sustain Universal Health Coverage

2

Accelerate progress towards ending HIV/AIDS, TB, Hepatitis, Malaria and NTDs

3


Strengthen health emergency prevention, preparedness and response

4

Address the burden of NCDs and promote mental health and well-being

5

Optimize partnerships to achieve healthier populations



Snapshot of Key Achievements



Credit: Gavi/2023/Peter Caton

● @reallygreatsite

814,929

girls aged 9-14 years vaccinated against human papillomavirus (HPV) part of a broader initiative to eliminate cervical cancer as a public health problem among women



1,800,000

oral cholera vaccine doses administered to over 1.5 million targeted people in hard hit areas during the response to the 2023/2024 cholera outbreak



3,917,047

children under the age of five vaccinated against polio in response to the resurgence of wild poliovirus in neighboring Malawi, Mozambique and Tanzania.



Credit: © WFP/Theresa Piorr

Exclusive breastfeeding rate among mothers attending MCH services in the first, second and third level health facilities increased from

64% to 81% ↑

Organic View

Post 2

UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE: LIFE COURSE



Zambia has committed to making significant progress towards universal health coverage (UHC) as part of the 2030 Agenda. WHO has been supporting the Ministry of Health in implementing various initiatives and facilitating the improvement of health and well-being of populations across all ages, strengthening health systems to achieve UHC.



Health Information System

Zambia, through the Ministry of Health has been implementing the National Health Strategic Plan (NHSP) 2022-2026 to improve service delivery and achieve the health-related targets of the SDG3.

Achievements

National Health Strategic Plan



The WCO provided technical and financial support to the Ministry of Health (MoH) to conduct a Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the National Health Strategic Plan (NHSP 2022 - 2026), after two and half years of its implementation.

During the NHSP MTR process, **49 staff members from the MoH and partner organizations** enhanced their skills through targeted training and hands-on experience in data mining, intervention assessments, field-level interviews, data analysis, and report writing. This significantly strengthened institutional capacity for evidence-based decision-making and program evaluation.

Health Labour Market Analysis



The WCO supported the MoH to conduct the Health Labour Market Analysis (HLMA). Through the adaptation of the WHO HLMA tool to Zambia's context, MoH conducted an exploratory survey on **1,720 health workers from 121 health facilities**. The results of the survey provided insights into the factors driving the health workforce supply and demand and will inform policy and investment decisions and address workforce shortages and specific challenges.

The HLMA report is instrumental in assessing Zambia's health workforce dynamics, highlighting supply-demand trends, identifying critical gaps, and informing strategic policy interventions for health system enhancement.

Harmonized Health Facility Assessment (HHFA)



The WCO supported the MoH to conduct the 2021/2022 Harmonized Health Facility Assessment (HHFA) to ensure availability of accurate and up-to-date data on the country's readiness to provide essential health services. This comprehensive assessment provided vital information on general service availability, service readiness, service-specific availability and health systems management. From the HHFA assessment report, **nine (9) knowledge products, (three (3) policy briefs, four (4) fact sheets and two (2) infographics)** were developed and disseminated at the Zambia Health Research Conference (ZHRC) to inform strategic health planning and system strengthening in the country.

Health Workforce



The WCO supported the MoH's participation in the Africa Regional Health Workforce Investment Forum held in Windhoek, Namibia. Additionally, the WCO organized the Africa Health Professions Education Dialogue in Lusaka, which led to the adaptation of WHO's Global Competency and Outcomes Framework for UHC and the development of the Lusaka Statement on Health Professions Education. These efforts reaffirm Zambia's commitment to transformative health education and alignment with global priorities for achieving Universal Health Coverage and strengthening health security.



Survey of Medical Imaging Services



The WCO coordinated a national online survey of imaging services in the country from public hospitals in all 10 provinces. Ninety-five (95) responses were submitted to contribute to the regional strategy for improving the medical imaging sector.

HIGHLIGHT



Strengthening Zambia's Health Financing for Sustainable Impact

Zambia's health sector grapples with significant financial and structural challenges, largely stemming from inconsistent funding and over-reliance on external resources. These issues contribute to chronic underfunding, poor integration of donor resources, and inefficiencies in service delivery. The WHO has taken critical steps to address these obstacles, such as training 21 health professionals on Systems Health Accounts and refining the National Health Accounts report for 2017-2021. These initiatives have institutionalized NHA processes in Zambia, equipping key personnel with the skills to monitor financial flows and resource allocations effectively. However, challenges remain, particularly regarding the transparency of financial data from cooperating partners. Collaboration between the Ministry of Health and the WHO, alongside support from the World Bank, has mitigated some of these issues, reducing resistance to data submission and enhancing compliance with NHA practices. Ultimately, these efforts aim to establish a more efficient and sustainable health financing system in Zambia.

Service Delivery



The WCO facilitated the establishment of a tripartite Health Partnership agreement between Malawi, Scotland, and Zambia, aimed at advancing quality improvement initiatives across the three nations. This culminated in a high-level in-person tripartite partnership meeting, fostering deeper collaboration and strategic alignment.

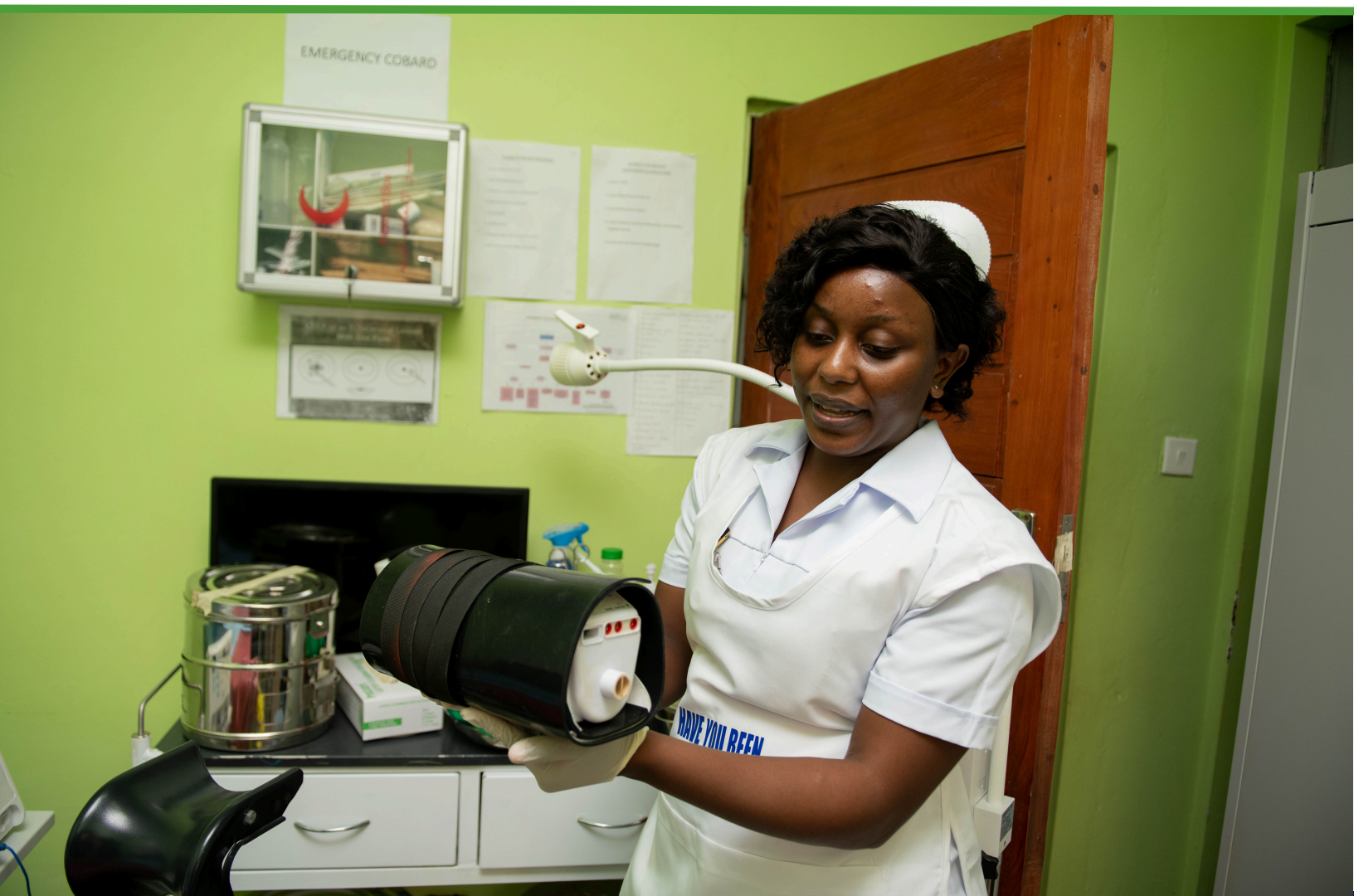


Zambia with support from the WCO, conducted a nationwide assessment of emergency and surgical healthcare services in **116 facilities**, informing revisions to Zambia's National Surgical, Obstetric, and Anesthesia Plan (NSOAP) to address critical gaps in infrastructure, workforce, and service delivery, particularly in rural areas.

Primary Health Care Index Tool



WHO facilitated the completion and submission of the regional primary health care index tool to report on the state of primary health care in Zambia.



Essential Drugs and Medicines

Achievements

National Medicines Policy



In collaboration with stakeholders and partners, the WCO supported the MoH to develop the 2023 National Medicines Policy after an intense performance evaluation of the 1999 National Drug Policy.

Medicines and Allied Substance Act reviewed



The WCO provided technical guidance to the Zambia Medicines Regulatory Authority (ZAMRA) to review and develop recommendations for the Medicines and Allied Substance Act of 2013, aligning it to current international best practices. Further, the WCO facilitated the review of the Health Professions Amendment Bill of 2024, and the Zambia Medicines and Medical Supplies Agency (ZAMMSA) Amendment Bill of 2024.



The WCO provided technical support to ZAMRA in reviewing draft guidelines for the application process to amend marketing authorization for human-use vaccines, strengthening regulatory oversight in Zambia's pharmaceutical sector.



In collaboration with the World Bank, the WCO facilitated the identification of priority supply chain needs requiring funding support. Further, working with the MoH, coordinated the import permit applications and processing of WHO-imported medicines and medical supplies, ensuring timely availability of essential health commodities.

Strengthening Access to Childhood Cancer



In 2024, significant progress was made in strengthening childhood cancer care in Zambia through the **Global Platform for Access to Childhood Cancer Medicines (GPACCM) initiative**.

With the support of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, the WCO supported the MoH to conduct a country readiness assessment and implementation exercise in preparation of the receipt of the childhood cancer medicines from the Global Platform for Access to Childhood Cancer Medicines (GPACC).

The WCO supported the MoH to develop a two-year National Implementation plan, adapt to the Zambian context, **17 Standard Operating Procedures and structured implementation plan**.

The WCO and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital further, conducted an orientation for national stakeholders on the GPACCM SOPs, focusing on clinical management, procurement, and supply chain. Priority SOP sections were tailored to the Zambian context by the Childhood Cancer Subcommittee of the National Cancer Control Technical Working Group (TWG).

Maternal and Newborn Health

Access to quality healthcare during pregnancy, childbirth, and early childhood is essential to reducing maternal and infant deaths and preventing long-term health complications. Zambia has made remarkable progress under this indicator with the **maternal mortality ratio declining to 187 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2024 from 252 per 100,000 live births in 2018** and the **neonatal mortality ratio decreased from 27 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2018 to 17 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2024**.

HIGHLIGHT

New Antenatal care Model for Africa and India (NAMAI) Project: Enhancing the capacity of healthcare providers and improving the quality of maternal and child health services in Zambia

WHO provided comprehensive technical support for the training of **9 program managers** responsible for maternal and child health, including principal nursing officers from the Eastern Province health office and district nursing officers with their assistants from Chipata, Chadiza, and Katete District Health Offices. Additionally, **34 healthcare providers** from research facilities were trained in the national Antenatal Care (ANC) guidelines, and **40 healthcare providers** received training in Basic Antenatal Care Ultrasound Scanning for frontline healthcare providers.

To enhance diagnostic capabilities, WHO procured and distributed **16 portable ultrasound scan machines and 16 ultrasound printers** to the implementation research (IR) sites in **14 health facilities** in Eastern province. This equipment is crucial for improving the quality of antenatal care services provided to expectant mothers.

WHO provided technical support for the training of **36 healthcare providers, 14 health facility in-charges, 3 district nursing officers, and 2 provincial nursing officers** in the ANC digital module. Joint monitoring and support visits to all IR sites were coordinated using the Programme Reporting Standards (PRS), and efforts were made to improve the quality of data collected by the NAMAI Zambia site research staff.



Achievements



The WCO provided support in the process of reviewing and updating key sexual and reproductive health guidelines, including the Abortion Care Guidelines, the Maternal and Perinatal Death Surveillance and Response (MPDSR) training package, the Antenatal Care Guidelines, and the Zambia Family Planning Guidelines and Protocols



100 healthcare workers, capacitated with the skills and knowledge to improve healthcare service delivery before, during and after pregnancy and childbirth.

Quality of Care

The quality of healthcare in Zambia has seen notable improvements, particularly with the implementation of the National Health Strategic Plan (2022-2026). This plan aims to, among many other things, address key challenges in the provision and access to quality healthcare for all citizens.

Achievements

National Quality Improvement (QI)



The WCO provided technical support to the MoH to conduct the 2023 National Quality Improvement conference bringing together key stakeholders in the health sector. **88 researchers** from across the 10 provinces presented and disseminated over **60 quality improvement projects, with 18 participants awarded for their outstanding contributions to healthcare innovations.**

The WCO supported the development of Zambia's **National Quality of Care and Patient Safety Strategy**, the **revision and adaptation of service quality tools (SQA)** and the **Quality Improvement training manuals for the Adolescent Health Programme**, to strengthen the framework for sustainable healthcare quality improvements.

Patient Reported Experience Measures (PREMs) Study



The WCO in collaboration with WHO/HQ supported the MOH and National Health Research Authority (NHRA) to conduct a study titled "**Patient Reported Experience Measures (PREMs)**," which enrolled **700 participants from 20 health facilities** in four districts namely Lusaka, Chilanga, Kapiri Mposhi and Mkushi.

The study reviewed that **38% of the respondents felt the primary care professionals did not spend enough time with them and 44% felt they were not involved in the decisions made about their care.** Overall, **33% of the respondents rated the experience of receiving care from their primary care providers in the facility as being moderately-bad.** The focus of the study was to allow for finding and addressing any operational bottlenecks as well as testing the questionnaire for possible roll out in other countries to be used at the facility level as patient experience feedback to improve service delivery.

Digital Health



The WCO supported the MoH in participating in the high-level virtual launch of the Global Digital Health Initiative (GDHI), where Zambia was recognized as a front-runner country. As part of these efforts, the WCO helped **mobilize US\$1 million from the Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF) to strengthen Zambia's digital health initiatives.**

To advance digital health strategies, the WCO supported the MoH to conduct a Digital Health Maturity Assessment and develop the National Digital Health Atlas, providing a comprehensive overview of the country's digital health landscape.

Continuity of Essential Health Services

Maintaining essential health services during public health emergencies is critical in preventing deaths from treatable and vaccine-preventable conditions.

Achievements



The WCO supported the MoH to conduct a Rapid Assessment on the continuity and utilization of essential health services during the 2023-2024 cholera outbreak in all 10 provinces using data from DHIS2 database. In addition, rapid site level assessments were conducted in **10 health facilities of Lusaka** district that were situated in areas hard hit by the cholera outbreak. The findings of the assessment led to the MoH and the ZNPHI to start the process of reviewing and developing guidelines for Continuation of Essential Health Services during public health emergencies.

UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE: COMMUNICABLE AND NONCOMMUNICABLE DISEASES



Zambia faces a double burden of disease, with high rates of both communicable and non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Communicable diseases, like malaria, HIV/AIDS, and tuberculosis, remain significant concerns, while NCDs like cancers, mental health, diabetes and, cardiovascular diseases (CVD), and trauma are pertinent.

Malaria Prevention, Control and Elimination

To enhance malaria prevention, the WCO supported the National Malaria Elimination Programme to increase malaria coverage by **distributing 11.5 million insecticide treated nets (ITNs) to households across all 10 provinces**, conducting nationwide indoor residual spraying (IRS) and implemented the intermittent preventive treatment during pregnancy.

Achievements

2024 Malaria Indicator Survey



In 2024, the WCO supported the MoH to conduct a national Malaria Indicator Survey (MIS) which showed an **increase in the number of household ownership of Insecticide Treated nets (ITNs) from 51% in 2021 to 77% in 2024**

Additionally, the MIS showed an increase in ITN utilization among pregnant women, from **41% to 66%**. **Fever prevalence among children under five decreased from 18% in 2021 to 11 in 2024.**

HIGHLIGHT



Strengthening Zambia's Malaria Elimination Efforts: Lessons from the Midterm Review 2024

The Midterm Review (MTR) of Zambia's National Malaria Elimination Strategic Plan (NMESP) 2022-2026 reveals critical insights into the country's malaria control efforts. While challenges persist, such as rising malaria incidence and underfunded interventions, significant actions undertaken include the **development of a collaborative Malaria Operational Plan and increasing community health worker participation in case management.**

Additionally, **the successful mass distribution of insecticide-treated nets (ITNs) has notably raised household coverage.** However, the MTR highlights critical gaps, including insufficient absorption of available funds and procurement bottlenecks that hinder timely intervention implementations. Addressing these areas is crucial for improving efficacy and reaching the goal of reducing malaria incidence.

The review emphasizes the importance of adaptive strategies, improved communication through Social Behavior Change (SBC) initiatives, and enhanced partnerships to leverage resources for a more significant impact. The findings provide a framework for ongoing and future malaria elimination efforts, with a goal to ensure that Zambia's strategic objectives are met effectively by 2026.

Achievements



3.9 million people protected from malaria with the indoor residual spraying in **840,969 households.**



Malaria Diagnosis and Treatment guidelines revised, based on WHO guidelines to enhance prompt and effective malaria case management



Multi country community based, test and treat malaria project introduced in Runfunsa District, enhancing capacity in malaria surveillance, diagnosis and treatment among community-based health workers.

Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs)

The WCO supported the MoH to implement core interventions on disease management, morbidity management and disability prevention. Preventive chemotherapy and vector control integrated with malaria prevention and control and safe water, sanitation and hygiene, in line with the NTD master plan 2022-2026.

Achievements

Mass Drug Administration (MDA) Campaigns

The WCO supported the MoH to scale up mass drug administration campaigns for selected diseases to endemic districts, with Lymphatic filariasis MDAs recording a **65% coverage**. Schistosomiasis MDAs reached **100% geographical coverage**, and **9 million** individuals were treated for trachoma.

Capacity building

To enhance Human Trypanosomiasis (HAT) case management and surveillance, the WCO coordinated the supportive mentorship training exercise of Technical Support Supervision and Training on Human Trypanosomiasis for healthcare workers from **14 hospitals** across Central, Eastern Northern and Northwestern provinces.

HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis

Although progress has been made towards epidemic control, challenges remain in prevention of new HIV infections. The annual incidence of HIV among adults aged 15-49 years is 0.31%, corresponding to approximately 28,000 new cases. Reducing new HIV infections through combination prevention is key in attaining HIV epidemic control

Achievements

HIV prevention approaches



As part of combination prevention approaches, Zambia introduced the long-acting injectable cabotegravir (CAB-LA) for pre-exposure prophylaxis of HIV infection. All clients must have two negative serological rapid HIV test (Determine and Abbot Bioline) results before being initiated on CAB-LA.

The WCO facilitated the provision of **125,000 Abbot Bioline HIV test kits** to the MoH for use in facilities providing services for pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) of HIV infection to ensure continuity of services as well as prevention of stock out of commodities.

HIV Self-testing Impact Assessment

The WCO supported the MoH to conduct of an HIV self-testing impact assessment across **185 facilities in five Zambian provinces (Central, Copperbelt, Eastern, Lusaka, and Southern)**. The aim was to evaluate distribution and uptake to guide policy for scaling up the initiative. **40.5 per cent of 42,479 HIV self-test kits were dispensed in 2020 whilst the year 2021 had the least (18.4%) due to stock-outs. Most of the kits (57.6%) were dispensed to those aged 25 years and above whilst 42.4% were dispensed to those aged between 15 and 24 years.** The distribution between males (50.2%) and females (49.8%) was approximately equal.

A total of **1,699 had a reactive test result of which 44.6% were confirmed positive at health facilities. 50% and 41% of self-test reactive results for males and females respectively, were confirmed HIV positive. Almost all (99%) clients with confirmed HIV positive results were linked to care and treatment.** The assessment confirmed HIV self-testing as effective in reaching underserved populations, while highlighting the need to address stock-outs and strengthen health worker capacity for quality service delivery.

HIGHLIGHT

Addressing Misinformation about PrEP among Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women

The annual incidence of HIV among young people aged 15-24 years is 0.4 per cent with young women having a higher incidence at 0.8 per cent. Furthermore, adolescents and young women accounting for about 53.7% of pregnant and breastfeeding women is a possible risk for new maternal HIV acquisition as well as vertical transmission of HIV. The uptake of pre-exposure prophylaxis of HIV infection by pregnant and breastfeeding women is sub-optimal due to the lack of awareness, misinformation and misconceptions about PrEP's purpose.

WHO supported the Ministry of Health and the National HIV/AIDS/STI/TB Council **to conduct a four-week mass media awareness campaign, a significant step toward improving education and health-seeking behavior regarding PrEP among pregnant and breastfeeding women.** The campaign helped dispel misunderstandings and raise awareness about its availability and benefits.



Noncommunicable Diseases

The WCO supported the MoH to improve prevention, early detection, treatment and management of people with or at high risk for cardiovascular disease, cancer, chronic respiratory disease, diabetes and other noncommunicable diseases at primary health care level.

Implementation of the PEN Plus Project

In collaboration with UNICEF, the WCO supported the MoH to adopt and adapt the **WHO Package of Essential Noncommunicable (PEN) diseases guidelines**. The document was further used to train trainers and scale-up in facilities implementing the PEN. The National PEN-Plus-Operational Plan and NCDs treatment guidelines were finalized.

With the generous support of the Helmsley Charitable Trust, the WCO in collaboration with CIDRZ, supported the MoH to assess **30 first level hospitals** in Lusaka, Eastern, Copperbelt, Northwestern, Southern and Western Provinces for readiness to implement the PEN Plus Project aimed at integrating the management of severe NCDs at first level hospitals.



Mental Health

The WCO supported the MoH to conduct the Intersectoral Global Action Plan on Epilepsy and Other Neurological Disorders (IGAP) and Global Dementia Observatory (GDO) Surveys. The information obtained contributed to the Global Status Report on Neurology.

The WCO supported the MoH to conduct the **2024 Mental Health Atlas Survey** which was used to develop the country profile in the 2024 Mental Health Atlas. The Atlas is a tool used to measure progress against the goals and targets of WHO's Comprehensive Mental Health Action plan 2013-2030.

HIGHLIGHT



Strengthening Zambia's Immunization Efforts: A Path Towards Measles Control

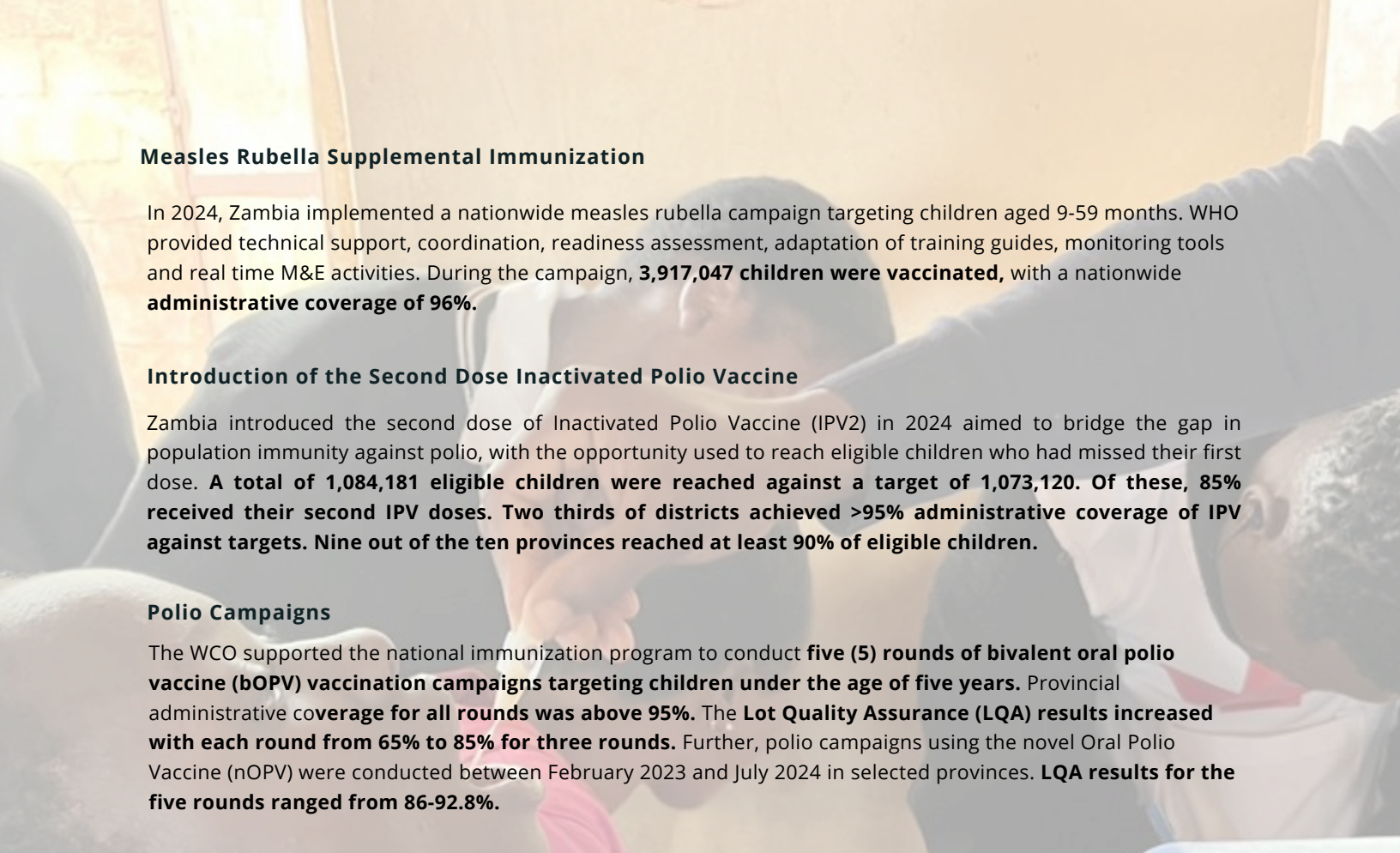
In Zambia, the large gap between first and second dose coverage of Measles Vaccination has led to significant outbreaks, particularly in 2022-23, emphasizing the need for improved immunization strategies. Between 2018 and 2022, while coverage of the first dose (MCV1) exceeded the 95%, the second dose (MCV2) lagged behind, remaining below 60%.

To address this issue, WHO collaborated with the Ministry of Health and key partners to **launch the Zambia National Immunization Strategy (ZNIS)**, focusing on strengthening measles control and elimination. A comprehensive approach was taken, including data analytics, training modules for health workers, and real-time monitoring through digital tools. **These efforts contributed to a notable increase in MCV2 coverage, with projections suggesting an increase to 70% in 2024.**

Achievements

Vaccine Safety Surveillance

To strengthen AEFI surveillance and against a background of sub-optimal Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFIs) of less than 10 reports per annum in routine immunization, the WCO supported the roll out of VigiMobile, a customizable digital tool for health workers to report adverse events following immunizations in five (5) provinces. This resulted in an increase in reported AEFIs from **128 cases in 2023 to 287 cases in 2024.**



Measles Rubella Supplemental Immunization


In 2024, Zambia implemented a nationwide measles rubella campaign targeting children aged 9-59 months. WHO provided technical support, coordination, readiness assessment, adaptation of training guides, monitoring tools and real time M&E activities. During the campaign, **3,917,047 children were vaccinated**, with a nationwide **administrative coverage of 96%**.

Introduction of the Second Dose Inactivated Polio Vaccine

Zambia introduced the second dose of Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV2) in 2024 aimed to bridge the gap in population immunity against polio, with the opportunity used to reach eligible children who had missed their first dose. **A total of 1,084,181 eligible children were reached against a target of 1,073,120. Of these, 85% received their second IPV doses. Two thirds of districts achieved >95% administrative coverage of IPV against targets. Nine out of the ten provinces reached at least 90% of eligible children.**

Polio Campaigns

The WCO supported the national immunization program to conduct **five (5) rounds of bivalent oral polio vaccine (bOPV) vaccination campaigns targeting children under the age of five years**. Provincial administrative coverage for all rounds was above 95%. The **Lot Quality Assurance (LQA) results increased with each round from 65% to 85% for three rounds**. Further, polio campaigns using the novel Oral Polio Vaccine (nOPV) were conducted between February 2023 and July 2024 in selected provinces. **LQA results for the five rounds ranged from 86-92.8%.**



Cholera Outbreak Control through Oral Cholera Vaccine

As part of the overall response to the major cholera outbreak, that Zambia experienced, the WCO provided support to the MoH to access and implement the reactive OCV campaign that reached **2,180,848 eligible individuals in targeted hotspots with 98.5% coverage** in Lusaka, Chilanga, Chongwe, Luangwa, Rufunsa and Chipata districts, significantly contributing to curbing the outbreak.

Tobacco Control

Zambia ratified the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) in May 2008 in order to address the devastating effects of the tobacco epidemic. Pieces of legislation such as the Public Health Act of 1992 and Statutory Instrument No.39 on smoke free environments exist. However, enforcement remains weak. Although Zambia has witnessed severe tobacco industry interference particularly in adopting tobacco control legislation for more than a decade, significant milestones of progress have been recorded on many fronts.

Achievements

Tobacco Control Bill

The WCO provided support to the MoH to facilitate a series of consultative meetings on the tobacco control bill with key line ministries and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). In January 2023, the Cabinet Office granted approval in principle for the introduction of the tobacco control bill in Parliament. Drafted by the Ministry of Justice and subsequently validated by all key line ministries and the private sector, the bill is now set to be presented to the internal legislative committee for review by all key line ministries and CSOs.

Launch of the Zambia Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) 2021 Country Report

The Global Youth Tobacco Survey enhances countries' capacity to monitor youth tobacco use initiation and consumption. In 2024, the WCO supported the MoH to launch the Zambia GYTS 2021 Country Report.

The GYTS of 2021 demonstrated that nearly **40% of 13-15 year-olds** have already initiated smoking by **the age of 7**, **24.1%** of students are exposed to secondhand smoke at home and current **tobacco users' prevalence rate was highest in tobacco growing regions at 18.2% compared to Lusaka at 11.0% and the national prevalence at 12.1%.**





The WCO in collaboration with the World Food Programme (WFP), supported Zambia in transitioning tobacco farmers to alternative livelihoods in Chipangali District, with a focus on sustainable agriculture and food security. **500 farmers** have now successfully transitioned to growing profitable, healthy, and environmentally sound alternative crops to tobacco cultivation.

The WCO supported the MoH to conduct a countrywide sensitization campaign to raise awareness on the devastating health, social and environmental effects of tobacco production.

Nutrition and Food Safety

Food Safety

Although the extent of food borne risks in Zambia isn't fully known, the re-occurrence of cholera, typhoid, dysentery and non-bloody diarrhea is highly linked to challenges of food safety in Zambia. It is estimated that approximately 1 in 10 people fall ill after eating contained food. Children under the age of 5 carry 40% of the foodborne disease burden. Access to safe and nutritious food is key to sustaining life and promoting good health.

The WCO supported the MoH to mobilize **\$120,000 from the CODEX Trust Fund to enhance coordination and strengthen food standards in the country.**

- Supported the MoH to constitute the Food Safety Technical Working Group, contribute to the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN), and to implement adequate infrastructure (Policies, Guidelines, Standards) to manage food safety risks and respond to food safety emergencies.

- Supported the development of a Multi-Sector Food Safety Plan in line with the Global Strategy for Food Safety (2022-2030) and the review, harmonization and alignment of Standards and Regulations of various food products in accordance with the Food Safety Act

A background image showing a group of children in a community setting. In the foreground, a young girl is looking towards the right. Behind her, other children are visible, some wearing colorful patterned clothing. The image is slightly blurred, focusing attention on the text overlay.

Achievements

Enhancing the Nutrition Status of Children

With the generous support of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Phase II project, the WCO supported the implementation of the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) and the In-patient Management of Severe Wasting in **30 1st and 2nd level health facilities across 17 districts** implementing the **100 most critical days program for stunting reduction**.

960 health care workers providing mother and child health services from **30 health facilities** were capacitated in the BFHI using the WHO module. Baby friendly hospital initiative training package adopted, printed and distributed for use.

Exclusive breastfeeding rate among mothers attending MCH services in the first, second and third level health facilities increased from **64% in 2022 to 81% in 2024**.

In-Patient Management of Severe Acute Malnutrition

The WCO supported the MoH to adopt the directors, clinical and participant modules for the management of severe acute malnutrition. These modules were used to train health workers in 1st, 2nd and 3rd level hospitals that manage children with severe wasting, resulting in treatment of **536 children with severe acute malnutrition, with 81% cure rate, 6% mortality and 13% defaulter rate in 2024 compared to 70% cure rate, 11% mortality and 18% defaulter in 2023**.

The WCO supported the MoH to conduct a data review and audit on nutrition treatment, care and support practices currently in use in third level hospital of Lusaka with the aim of developing standardized guidelines in treatment, care and support.

Nutrition Information System

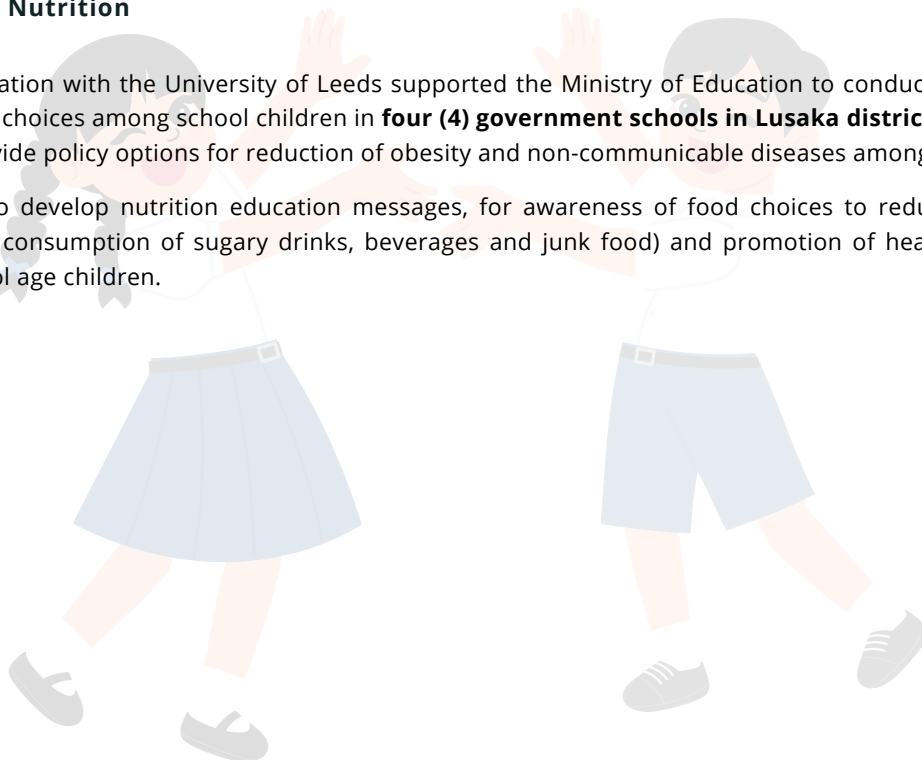
Achievements

- ✓ With support of the European Union (EU), the WCO supported the MoH to conduct a data quality audit in **66 health facilities across 17 districts** to form a baseline for the Nutrition Information System.
- ✓ The WCO provided technical support to MoH to orient **1,314 health care workers from 657 health facilities** in the nutrition DHIS2. Of these health workers, **50%** were responsible for nutrition and **50%** responsible for information and data analysis.
- ✓ The WCO supported the revision and updating of the DHIS2 data elements to include protocols for use in assessment of data performance and management.
- ✓ The WCO supported the development of a performance tracker to track nutrition indicators for reporting as per of the monitoring and evaluation system and data utilization

School Health and Nutrition

The WCO in collaboration with the University of Leeds supported the Ministry of Education to conduct a study to understand the food choices among school children in **four (4) government schools in Lusaka district**. The study was designed to provide policy options for reduction of obesity and non-communicable diseases among children.

Results were used to develop nutrition education messages, for awareness of food choices to reduce obesity (resulting from high consumption of sugary drinks, beverages and junk food) and promotion of healthy eating choices among school age children.





Zambia's health system is overburdened due to concurrent emergencies such as cholera, measles, anthrax and most recently mpox and the effects of climate change, such as drought. The WCO in collaboration with the MoH, the Zambia National Public Health Institute (ZNPHI) and Health Cooperating Partners continued to support subnational levels in capacity building to prevent, early detect and effectively respond to public health emergencies.



Outbreak Response

Cholera Outbreak

The WCO supported MoH to respond to one of Zambia's worst cholera outbreaks. The outbreak was declared in October 2023 and rapidly spread to nine of the country's ten provinces, with Lusaka, Central, and Eastern provinces being the most affected. **By January 2024, over 10,800 cases and 432 deaths had been reported.**

The outbreak was exacerbated by limited access to clean water, inadequate sanitation infrastructure, and poor hygiene practices in densely populated urban areas. In response, the MoH, with support from the WCO and partners such as Gavi and UNICEF, launched a large-scale oral cholera vaccination campaign targeting **1.5 million people. Over 1.7 million vaccine doses were secured, and WHO deployed 23 experts** to support emergency coordination, case management, and public health education.

Achievements



Cholera commodities and supplies

With the generous support of partners such as the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and the Africa Public Health Emergency Fund (APHEF), the WCO procured and delivered over **25 tons and 145m3 of cholera supplies, sufficient to treat approximately 7,000 cases**, and additional resources were mobilized to bolster infection prevention and control to Central, Copperbelt, Lusaka and Southern Provinces. These included **70 emergency cholera kits, over 200 cholera rapid diagnostic tests, laboratory diagnostic supplies, PPE, 200 glucometer kits, 300 body bags, 360 cholera beds, and 300 buckets of 45 kg of chlorine worth over \$400, 000**. Two chartered flights from Nairobi and one cargo flight from Dakar were used for shipping some of these commodities while cholera beds and chlorine were procured locally.



Upgrading Cholera Treatment Centers (CTCs)

The WCO facilitated the **upgrade of seven (7) cholera treatment centers (CTCs)** in Lusaka (Matero, Chipata, George and Chilanga) and Southern (Chipepo, Namoomba, Lumbembe) provinces to meet the standard outlined in the Global Task Force on Cholera Control (GTFCC). These upgrades ensured the centers were well-equipped to handle the influx of patients and provide quality care.



Training and Deployment of Community Based Volunteers

Over **500 community-based volunteers** were trained and deployed to support the response efforts, using the integrated community strategy. These volunteers played an important role in educating the community about cholera prevention, identifying, and referring suspected cases and manning oral rehydration points, and assisting in case management at selected CTCs.

Anthrax Outbreak

The WCO provided technical support for the anthrax outbreak investigation in Eastern, Northwestern, Southern and Western provinces. Cumulatively, Zambia recorded 430 cases of both domestic and wildlife, as well as reports of anthrax in humans in 9 of the country's 10 provinces.

Achievements

The WCO supported the MoH to print Information, Education and Communication (IEC) material for anthrax awareness in affected provinces.

The WCO supported the MoH to train healthcare providers in case definition, reporting and case management in 5 provinces.

Mpox Outbreak

In response to the 2024 Mpox outbreak, WHO OSL unit procured and delivered Mpox various **laboratory supplies** to MoH which included sample collection and transportation commodities and laboratory diagnostics **worth over \$60, 000**. This resulted in strengthened laboratory diagnostic capacity to detect, sequence and report the circulating Mpox Clade Ib.



HIGHLIGHT

Strengthening Health Security: Lessons from Zambia's Public Health Response

Zambia faces significant public health challenges, including recurrent cholera outbreaks and the effects of climate change. In response to these threats, the country has implemented a series of initiatives aimed at improving health security and emergency preparedness. The annual assessments, such as the States Parties Annual Reporting (SPAR), have helped identify capacities and gaps within the health system, leading to the development of a robust National Action Plan for Health Security (NAPHS).

Innovative strategies like the Early Action Review and enhanced disease surveillance have significantly improved early detection and response to outbreaks. Despite facing challenges like inadequate funding and workforce limitations, collaborative efforts among different health sectors have resulted in reduced cholera transmission rates and case fatalities.

The establishment of Cholera Treatment Centers and strengthened Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) strategies have ensured the provision of quality healthcare while maintaining essential health services. Awareness campaigns have further engaged communities, highlighting the importance of education and collaboration in combatting public health threats.

Laboratory Services

Biosafety and Biosecurity (BSBS)

The WCO provided technical support to the MoH in the development of a national Biosafety and Biosecurity training curriculum using one Health approach. This led to increased compliance with IHR (2005) and ISO 15189 standards for the 29 participants trained thus boosting national capacity for sustainable BSBS implementation.

Quality Management Systems (QMS)

The WCO supported MoH to have **11 laboratories achieve ISO 15189 accreditation** through SADCAS in 2023 and three (3) additional laboratories recommended for accreditation pending resolution of nonconformities in 2024. Further, 19 mentors were trained in ToT by the Clinical Laboratory Standard Institute (CLSI) to support a national mentorship program to enhance local capacity to independently conduct QMS mentor trainings and contribute to quality improvement in Laboratory services.

Genomic Sequencing (GS)

The WCO supported the MoH to train **28 laboratory personnel** to build capacity in Genomic Sequencing and Bioinformatics and enhance skills to analyse data using bioinformatics tools, strengthening Zambia's preparedness for public health threats.

All-hazards emergency preparedness capacities assessed and reported

Joint External Evaluation (JEE)

The WCO supported the ZNPHI to convene the second Joint External Evaluation (JEE) in October 2023 to assess Zambia's compliance with the International Health Regulations (IHR) core capacities. Utilizing the WHO IHR Joint External Evaluation tool, the evaluation was conducted by a team of external experts with international experience in diverse technical areas who collaborated **with over 70 technical experts from Zambia's government bodies, academic institutions, and development partners**. This identification of critical gaps resulted in the prioritization of areas for improvement, to strengthen the country's overall health security and emergency preparedness. The JEE evaluation was used as a basis to successfully apply for funding during the first round of the Pandemic Fund. The country attracted over **18,000,000 USD** that will be used to address gaps towards attaining health security.

States Parties Self-Assessment Annual Reporting (SPAR)

With the support of the WCO and partners, Zambia successfully reported the implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005) for 2023 and 2024 using the IHR States Parties Self-Assessment Annual Reporting Tool (SPAR). The SPAR tool consists of 35 indicators for the 15 IHR capacities needed to detect, assess, notify, report and respond to public health risks and acute events of domestic and international concern. The country used the findings to develop annual operational plans for the succeeding years.

Intra/After Action Review IAR/AAR-Cholera I/AAR

With the support from the WCO, Zambia successfully conducted a national review of its cholera outbreak in 2024 where over 100 participants with experience working in the different cholera response pillars used WHO Intra-Action Review (IAR) guiding documents to identify cholera response best practices for sustenance as well as response challenges for improvement. New to this iteration of the IAR process was the opportunity to review the recommendations that had been made during the Early Action Review (EAR) using the 7-1-7 implementation framework and assess progress made from that point

Humanitarian Emergency Response to Drought and Floods

The WCO provided technical and financial support to the Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU), the MoH and ZNPHI for humanitarian response due to floods and drought. In 2023, approximately 700,000 people in 28 districts were affected with floods, while 5.6 million people were affected by drought in 84 districts

The WCO provided support to strengthen disease surveillance through;

- ✓ Coordination of the Health Cluster and technical input into the Nutrition Cluster. WHO supported the MoH to conduct advocacy and fundraising sessions as well as utilize the United Nation Central Emergency Relief Funds (UN CERF) and other partners to raise funds for use during the floods and drought responses'
- ✓ Support to data desk review of the IDSR and DHIS2 indicators and trend analysis in- cooperated into the VAC national report
- ✓ Initiated the development of Guidelines for Health preparedness and response in humanitarian situations





Health promotion in Zambia aims to improve the overall health and well-being of the population through a variety of approaches, including community engagement, health education, and policy changes.

Health Promotion

The WCO supported the MoH to complete the National Health Promotion Strategy 2022 to 2026, aligning it to the current National Health Strategic Plan.

The WCO facilitated the development of the National Healthy Cities Guidelines. The guidelines are being used to guide implementation at city, municipal and town councils in order to accelerate attainment of SDG 11.

The WCO supported Zambia to adapt the guidelines for healthy markets, refugee camps, villages and prisons in line with WHO standards.

Social Determinants of Health

The WCO provided technical support in the development of the national Health in All Policies (HiAP) guidelines and distributed to all focal points from different sectors and civic leaders.

The WCO facilitated the training of local authorities in Ndola and Chipata for the implementation of the healthy cities initiative and scaling up of addressing social determinants of health. This led to the domestication of the 2016 Shanghai Mayor's consensus on healthy cities.

The City's Integrated Development Plan 2023-2033 was developed to help address social determinants of health using the HiAP approaches.



Risk Communication and Community Engagement

The WCO facilitated the finalization of the multi-hazard Risk Communication and Community Engagement Plan and incorporated components of RCCE into the National Action Plan for Health Security (NAPHS) that will serve as a framework for implementing RCCE interventions before, during and after any health emergency.

The WCO provided technical support in the development of Risk Communication and Community Engagement action plans for Eastern (Vubwi and Petauke), Luapula (Nchelenge) and Northern (Mpulungu) provinces to support the cholera response outbreak. The plans improved the implementation of strategies, contributing to stopping the outbreaks through behaviour change.



HPV Vaccination Social Mobilization Support

The WCO supported the development of RCCE strategies for the HPV vaccination campaign to mobilize communities so as to attain the set targets.

Information, Education and Communication (IEC) Materials

The WCO supported the design, development and printing of messages and Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials to support community sensitization and engagement programmes on epidemic prone diseases.

The WCO supported the MoH to develop IEC materials **for the ROTAVAC Vaccine Switch**. The materials enabled accurate and timely risk communication to the public through various channels in order to promote vaccination and improve acceptance of the vaccine. Posters, brochures, an immunization schedule card and a radio Public Service Announcement and radio discussion guide were developed. The MOH has used the materials to engage radio stations for dissemination.

The WCO supported the MoH in the development and printing of posters, brochures and discussion guides on Anthrax, enhancing efforts for educating the public about Anthrax signs and symptoms and prevention measures.





The WCO supported the MoH to develop the **National Gender and Health Strategy**, mainstreaming and incorporating gender, equity and human rights approach in health policies and health service delivery.

In collaboration with the UN Gender Theme Group, the WCO facilitated support to the MoH to create more understanding about the **UN Gender accountability tools and strengthened the implementation of the UN Scorecard and the GEM Marker in the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework**.

The WCO supported the MoH to enhance awareness among the public through international and local commemoration days i.e. International Women's Day, 16 Days of Activism against GBV and the Safe Motherhood Week.

Mainstreaming Behavioural Insights into Public Health

With the support of the Rockefeller Foundation, under the **"Mainstreaming Behavioural Insights into Public Health in the African Region Project,"** the WCO provided technical assistance to the MoH to implement and test the integration of Behavioural Insights in Antenatal Care in **two districts (Manyinga and Chipili)**. Data was collected through two waves, recommending the integration of BI indicators into routine data collection systems to improve early antenatal attendance monitoring and reporting. A behaviour change intervention was conducted in Chipili to respond to the results.

Prevention of Sexual Abuse, Exploitation and Harrassment (PRSEAH)

The WCO **effectively upheld the principles of Zero Tolerance towards Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH), as well as Zero Tolerance for inaction and retaliation**, in alignment with the WHO Policy on Preventing Sexual Misconduct. As a result, awareness and understanding of SEAH prevention significantly increased among WHO staff, contractors, implementing partners, and other non-UN personnel. This improvement was evidenced by the successful completion of mandatory WHO PRSEAH online training courses and active participation in SEAH briefings conducted during staff meetings, technical workshops, and both local and international forums.

CORPORATE SERVICES AND ENABLING FUNCTIONS



Communicating Impact

Communications impact increased through the development of impact communication materials and active social media engagement. An average audience of **167,500** were reached with communications outreach both on social media and traditional media. **Programme impact documents** were developed and published, including quarterly newsletters

Achievements

7 Impact videos produced and disseminated



23 Stories developed and disseminated on website, social media platforms.



Strong Sustainable Partnerships

External Relations and Partnerships

In 2023 and 2024, WHO Zambia continued to significantly strengthen its partnerships and resource mobilization efforts.



The WCO actively and regularly engaged with over **15 partners through the Health Cooperating Partners (HCP) group and as a member of the Leadership Troika** as well as in bilateral meetings, including key stakeholders such as the World Bank, Irish Aid, Gavi, USAID, US CDC, the EU and ECHO and others.

The WCO coordinated technical and operational partnerships during major public health emergencies, namely the worst cholera outbreak in Zambia's history in 2023/24 and a severe drought in 2024, engaging over **20 partners in each response**.

The WCO co-chaired the Health Cluster with the MoH, bringing together more than **30 partners, including civil society organizations**. In 2024, WHO together with UKHSA and USAID revived the HCP subgroup on Health Security and acted as a Secretariat to the group.

Resource Mobilization

In 2023, about **USD 15 million** were secured for health in Zambia through the country office, including **USD 13 million** from the World Bank's Pandemic Fund (together with FAO), and **EUR 2 million** in multi-annual funding from Irish Aid. Furthermore, the WCO secured about **USD \$9.4 million** from Gavi Alliance for immunization in the country

In 2024, WHO mobilized approximately **USD 1.8 million** for the cholera response from ECHO, CERF and APHEF, in addition, in a joint programme with UNDP and UNICEF, the WCO successfully secured **USD 450,000** from the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund to Catalyze Country Action for Non-Communicable Diseases and Mental Health and **USD 100,000** from the Road Safety Fund.

The WCO further developed a project with USAID for **USD 400,000**. For the first time, WHO in Zambia also entered into a collaborative partnership with the private sector with an agreement over **USD 100,000** signed with Prudential Zambia.



Operational Support



The WCO successfully facilitated local and international meetings within the stipulated budget through the good operating systems at the country office.

Fleet Management

The WCO donated two (2) vehicles to Copperbelt Provincial Health Office and Mwinilunga District Health Office respectively to enable the teams enhance disease surveillance and service delivery in far to reach areas.

The Country Support Unit (CSU) contributed to the achievement of the WCO cluster activities and programmes at **90%**, ensuring timely and safe arrival in the field, in compliance with WHO rules and regulations at all times.

Management of vehicles was fully implemented and closely monitored through the WHO tracking system at **85% under the country support unit.**

Financial Management



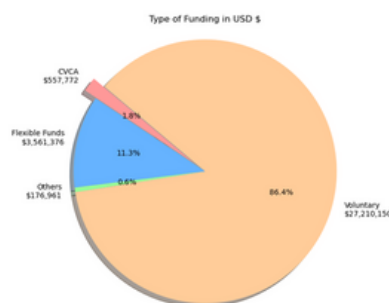
Digital payments were implemented in the WCO and resulted in timely, efficient payments for beneficiaries and enhanced cost saving. Payment was done for **95% of beneficiaries within 10 days of implementation.**

2024-2025 Budget allocated budget was **USD 38,313,305** and award budget was **USD 31,963,850.**

51% of budget utilized, equivalent to **USD 16,215,625**

Budget

Fund Type	Amount
Flexible funds	3,561,376
Voluntary funds	27,210,150
CVCA funds	557,772
Others	176,961





During 2023/2024, **4** vacant positions were advertised and **3** filled, bolstering the quality of service delivery in the country office.

Number of Staff



12 Females in
2023

11 Females in
2024



16 Males
in 2023

17 Males
in 2024

Total Staff = 28 for both years.

Demographics

23 National Staff

5 International Staff



Delivering with Partners



Delivering as One





**World Health
Organization**

Zambia

COUNTRY OFFICE

**Plot 4609 UN Annex Building
Corner Andrew Mwenya/Beit Road
Rhodes Park,, Lusaka.**



+260 211 255322/336/398



afwcozmregistry@who.int



[Website](#)



WHO ZAMBIA



Plot 4609 UN Annex Building, Corner Andrew Mwenya/Beit Road, Rhodes Park, Lusaka.



+260 211 255322/336/398



<https://www.afro.who.int/countries/zambia>



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