Independent Expert Committee Declares Rubella Eliminated from the Americas Region
Pamela Bravo, Donna Eberwine, Desirée Pastor and Cuauhtémoc Ruiz-Matus, PAHO-WDC

On 23 April 2015, an International Expert Committee declared that rubella had been eliminated from the Americas. This announcement was made during a meeting at the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) last week. This makes rubella the third vaccine-preventable disease to be eliminated from the Region of the Americas, following the regional eradication of smallpox in 1971 and polio, declared eliminated in 1994.

Following the widespread adoption of the MMR vaccine in the region’s national immunization programmes, PAHO/WHO member countries set in 2003 the target of eliminating rubella by 2010.

In the late 1990s, the English-speaking Caribbean countries pioneered the use of mass rubella vaccination campaigns targeting adolescents and adults. With support from PAHO/WHO and its Revolving Fund for Vaccine Procurement, some 250 million adolescents and adults in 32 countries and territories were vaccinated against rubella in between 1998 and 2008. As a result of these efforts, the last endemic (local origin) cases of rubella and CRS were reported in the Americas in 2009.

In its meeting last week, the International Expert Committee for Measles and Rubella Elimination in the Americas reviewed epidemiological evidence provided by PAHO/WHO and its member countries and concluded that there was no evidence of endemic transmission of rubella or CRS for five consecutive years, exceeding the three-year requirement for declaring the disease eliminated. The committee noted that, in the near future, it hopes to be able to declare the region free of measles as well.

This major public health achievement reflects the effort of and commitment of countries of the Americas, victory of partnerships and the hard work of thousands of health workers throughout the region.
World Immunization Week

In regions and countries around the world, the annual Immunization Week tradition is celebrated in many different ways, through launching ceremonies, immunization campaigns, media briefings, trainings, and social mobilization events, often crossing a range of themes.

This edition of the Global Immunization Newsletter shares with us updates on World Immunization Week events from the Eastern Mediterranean, European, and Pan American regions.

More information on the World Immunization Week campaign, including a video, posters, and feature story, is available on the WHO website.

10th European Immunization Week - Celebrating commitment to immunization
20-25 April 2015
Catharina de Kat-Reynen, WHO EURO

European Immunization Week (EIW) activities have been building in diversity and momentum for nine consecutive years. The 10th anniversary in 2015 was a fantastic opportunity to celebrate Member States’ ongoing progress towards the control of vaccine-preventable diseases and to promote awareness of the remaining challenges.

Inspired by a new path set out in the European Vaccine Action Plan, the message of this year’s EIW was clear: commitment is crucial at every level.

EIW served as the backdrop for a wide range of activities held throughout the European Region, including conferences, training courses, press conferences, interviews, flash mobs, twitter chats, radio talk shows and immunization activities. Promotional materials included videos, brochures, badges, banners, infographics and posters, produced in many of the Region’s languages. Online information about EIW, media coverage, blogs and social media activity were unprecedented, including over 1200 tweets using the #EIW2015 hashtag.

See the campaign website for more information on events and the many blogs posted during the week.

Materials launched during EIW:
WHO/Europe website
Infographic: Measles is bouncing back
Infographic: Rubella remains a threat
Video: What am I?
Fact sheet: Measles in the WHO European Region
Fact sheet: Rubella in the WHO European Region
Fact sheet: Polio in the WHO European Region

A new immunization advocacy library holds a series of documents to help immunization programme managers and other stakeholders advocate for the prioritization of immunization in political agendas and public health. More documents will be added to the library in the coming weeks.
Preparations for Celebrating the World Immunization Week in the Eastern Mediterranean Region
Vaccine Preventable Diseases and Immunization Unit WHO/EMRO

During the course of April 2015, nearly all Member States in the Eastern Mediterranean Region were busy finalizing their preparations for the celebration of World Immunization Week from 24-30 April 2015. This important initiative has been widely recognized and successfully marked by all countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Region since 2010. Preparations for 2015 World Immunization Week were initiated during the EPI Managers Meeting in Amman, in November 2014 with a dedicated session. Nineteen Member States (out of 21) have developed and submitted extensive national action plans to the WHO Regional Office. Each national plan was developed under the leadership of national immunization programmes, in collaboration with WHO and UNICEF country offices and other national partners.

Member States have prepared detailed plans of action addressing a variety of activities; national launching ceremonies, media campaigns, training, seminars and social mobilization events. During the week, many countries will be expanding their vaccination services with efforts such as tracking unvaccinated people, extending operational hours, implementing large-scale vaccination campaigns and leveraging Child Health Days to deliver an integrated package of life-saving health interventions. In addition, some of our Member States are planning to launch the introduction of new vaccines to their national programmes during World Immunization Week.

The global campaign theme for 2015 is Close the Immunization Gap. In parallel to the global theme, and as suggested during the November 2014 EPI managers meeting, Member States in the Region will be selecting their national themes for the 2015 World Immunization Week and producing advocacy materials according to their priorities and national context.

Video message by Dr Ala Alwan, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean can be accessed through this [webpage](#) or this [direct link](#).

Boost your Power! Get Vaccinated!
Hannah Kurtis, Alba Maria Ropero and Elizabeth Thrush, PAHO-WDC

Vaccination boosts immune systems and helps the body to fight against more than 20 preventable diseases, making people into “superheroes” with special powers to defeat illness. This year, PAHO’s Director, Dr Carissa F. Etienne, encouraged the Region of the Americas to be superheroes and get vaccinated through a one-minute Public Service Announcement (PSA).

To see the video in [English](#) or [Spanish](#).

Dr. Carissa F. Etienne: Boost your power. Get vaccinated. VWA2015_HD

“As a mother, a grandmother, a friend and a doctor, I’m here to tell you that vaccines truly save lives.” — Dr Etienne, PAHO Director.
In honor of Vaccination Week in the Americas 2015, PAHO/WHO wants to see your best superhero pose! Send us a picture or video of anyone, at any age, posing as a superhero and holding a sign that says #GetVax, #BoostYourPower and/or any other message in support of vaccination. See more information.

All photos that are submitted to PAHO/WHO will be available on the PAHO/WHO Boost Your Power Photo album.

The Ninth Session of PAHO/WHO’s Subcommittee on Program, Budget, and Administration of the Executive Committee also shows their support for VWA!

Vaccination Week in the Americas (VWA) Photography Campaign
Hannah Kurtis, Alba Maria Ropero and Elizabeth Thrush, PAHO-WDC

Vaccination Week in the Americas (VWA) 2015

Countries and territories in the Americas will be implementing a wide array of activities for Vaccination Week in the Americas (VWA) 2015. During this year’s VWA, health workers from all over the Region have plans to vaccinate more than 60 million individuals of all ages through a multitude of national vaccination efforts.

While not comprehensive, some examples of VWA activities that countries will be implementing this year include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Polio vaccination campaigns</th>
<th>Cuba, Ecuador, Grenada, Nicaragua, and Peru</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completing vaccination schedules for children &lt;5 years of age</td>
<td>Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, BVI, Cayman Islands, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaccination against measles and rubella, targeting both children and adults</td>
<td>Anguilla, the Dominican Republic, Peru, Suriname, Turks and Caicos and Uruguay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaccination against Tetanus/Diphtheria (Td) to prevent maternal and neonatal tetanus</td>
<td>Bolivia, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seasonal influenza campaigns (Southern Hemisphere formulation)</td>
<td>Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama and Uruguay, Uruguay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion of vaccination against pertussis for women in their third trimester of pregnancy or immediately post-partum</td>
<td>Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Belize, Colombia, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua and Panama,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additionally, several countries plan to use VWA as an opportunity to engage in specific information, education and communication (IEC) activities. These include promoting vaccination in public schools (Argentina); targeting education officers and school principals nationwide for orientation on the EPI (Jamaica); holding a one-day symposium on the challenges and prospects of the EPI (Haiti) and conducting training activities for health (Anguilla, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Lucia and Turks and Caicos).
Dominican Republic against Measles and Rubella
Irene Leal and Carlos Torres, PAHO-DOR

Within the framework of Vaccination Week in the Americas, the First Lady of Dominican Republic, Candida Montilla de Medina and the Minister of Health, Dr Altagracia Guzmán Marcelino, launched a national vaccination campaign against measles and rubella in the country. The vaccination campaign will target around 778,000 children under 5 years old throughout the entire country, and is supported by a media campaign.

Dr Guzman emphasized the political will to support the initiative and encouraged the whole population to go to their closest health center to receive the measles-rubella containing vaccine and deworming medication. Dr Guzman also recognized the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) for its ongoing technical cooperation on the vaccination campaign.

The PAHO/WHO representative, Dr Laura Ramírez Léon, highlighted the success of Vaccination Week in the Americas, which began in 2003 in response to a measles epidemic between Venezuela and Colombia. The success of the Region of the Americas has now expanded worldwide, and this year the fourth World Immunization Week (WIW) will be celebrated. WIW serves as a framework for initiatives that will take place in the six regions of the World Health Organization (WHO).

Finally, Dr Ramírez expressed special appreciation and gratitude to all of the health workers who bring vaccination to everyone with commitment and enthusiasm, despite the heat, distance, and size of the population. She stressed that they are the heroes of the day.

#GetVax +SocialGood Webcast
Lauren Brown Vulanovic, PAHO-WDC

To educate the public on the importance of immunization, PAHO/WHO and The UN Foundation held a special #GetVax +SocialGood webcast as part of the regional launch of Vaccination Week 2015 in the Americas, with the theme “Boost Your Power! Get Vaccinated!” broadcast live from Guayaquil, Ecuador.

Experts addressed issues such as the impact of vaccines in public health, recent outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases, the experience of Ecuador in vaccination, and collective ways to support vaccination from your community and/or organization.

A poster for the "#GetVax, #SocialGood webcast

Participants included Carissa F. Etienne, Director of PAHO/WHO; Carina Vance, Minister of Health, Ecuador; Gina Tambini, PAHO/WHO Representative in Ecuador; Cuauhtemoc Ruiz, Chief of the Comprehensive Family Immunization Unit at PAHO; Jon Andrus, Executive Vice President and Director, Vaccine Advocacy and Education, Sabin Institute; John Fitzsimmons, Deputy Director, Global Immunization Division Center for Global Health, CDC; and Grant Leaity, UNICEF Representative in Ecuador.

A recording of the live broadcast is available in English and Spanish.
The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) introduces Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV) into its routine Immunization Schedule

Mohammad Younus, UNICEF/DPRK; Abu Obeida Eltayeb, UNICEF/EAPRO

On 08 April 2015, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) launched the introduction of Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV) into its immunization programme, becoming the second country in the Asia and Pacific region after Nepal to introduce IPV.

The launch was chaired by Dr Kim Hyong Hun, Vice Minister from the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), UNICEF and WHO representatives to DPRK, and representatives from other line ministries and partners. Dr Kim Hyong Hun extended his thanks to Gavi, UNICEF and WHO for their support to DPRK and for their hard work to achieve the completion of polio eradication globally. UNICEF and WHO representatives commended the Government of DPRK for achieving and maintaining a polio-free status since 1996, adding that the introduction of IPV is a major step in the polio endgame, and thanking Gavi for facilitating the introduction of IPV in DPRK.

Over 350,000 children under 1 year of age are eligible for IPV, and the recommended one dose will be given at 14 weeks, together with the third dose of pentavalent and OPV.

Prior to the launch of IPV, the MoPH has undertaken a series of preparations in 208 counties across the country. These preparations include the training of over 8,300 health staff across the country, and the implementation of comprehensive communications and social mobilization activities to raise awareness of the importance of IPV and increase demand for immunization in general.

Experiences and lessons learned from the IPV introduction will be used to more broadly to raise the profile of EPI and further enhance DPRK’s capacity for future new vaccine introductions. The Vice Minister emphasized this point again and underscored that DPRK should not be complacent with the gains to date, and should continue its efforts towards achieving better improvements to the immunization programme.

**The Domino Effect: the Wider Impact of a Vaccine Introduction**

Leilia Dore, WHO HQ/Polio

Bangladesh is a country with a large birth cohort, growing urban areas, remote populations, and extreme weather. Yet against this challenging backdrop, the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) has led a quiet revolution, achieving 92% DTP3 coverage (WHO/UNICEF estimates 2013).

Bangladesh simultaneously introduced the inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) and the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) into its routine immunization programme in March 2015. “Each time we introduced a new vaccine over the past few years, there was a related increase in coverage,” said Dr Abdur Rahim, Project Manager of the EPI. The opportunity of additional funding and resources associated with any vaccine introduction is therefore used to improve the entire immunization system.

When polio was successfully eradicated from Bangladesh in 2000, Bangladesh’s EPI, together with WHO and UNICEF, began to integrate the polio infrastructure into routine immunization. Social mobilization channels, training schemes for healthcare workers, information systems and the cold chain were greatly enhanced through this process.

For the joint IPV and PCV introduction, health workers in Foridabad health centre in Bank Colony slum, Dhaka, received training on IPV, PCV, and refresher training on all other aspects of their work. This training is also critical to their role in going door-to-door to raise awareness of the vaccines. This local interaction also provides an opportunity to improve micro-plans through detailed knowledge of the community they serve and to increase the knowledge families have about immunization.

With every new vaccine introduction, there is a domino effect of improvements through the entire system, which is beginning to impact on other maternal and child health programmes. It is hoped that the energy from IPV and PCV introduction will be another driving force to bring coverage over 90% in the coming year.
Pakistan pioneers the new WHO-UNICEF comprehensive approach to Effective Vaccine Management (cEVM)

Nasrin Musa (WHO), Patrick Lydon (WHO) and Dmitri Davydov (UNICEF)

In 2014, Pakistan conducted an EVM assessment which showed that the minimum acceptable benchmark levels of vaccine management performance were not reached for cold chain storage, temperature and stock management, supply chain infrastructure, distribution systems, and logistics management information system. In addition, with 50% of vaccine storage points in the country not being equipped with WHO-prequalified cold chain equipment, Pakistan faces a challenging task to get its immunization supply chain system ready for the projected two-fold increase in storage required for the introductions of Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV) in 2015 and Rotavirus by 2018.

From 23 February-6 March 2015, a joint WHO / UNICEF technical support mission worked in Pakistan under the auspices of the global WHO/UNICEF Immunization Supply Chain and Logistics Hub, to help Pakistan develop a comprehensive Effective Vaccine Management Improvement Plan (cEVM-IP) aligned with the National and Province comprehensive multi-year plan (cMYP). This was the first time that WHO and UNICEF had pioneered the new cEVM approach in the EMRO region. The mission facilitated various workshops at the federal and provincial levels to validate the EVM assessment findings and collaboratively engage decision-makers, implementers and technical experts to develop province-specific cEVM-IPs. Each plan was anchored on a defined 2020 vision, supported with context-specific implementation roadmaps according to four strategic goals:

- Strengthening data for management by scaling-up a Vaccine Logistics Management System (vLMIS) to ensure reliable and timely data to effectively manage the supply chain,
- Strengthening human resources for logistics at all levels to ensure compliance with effective vaccine management policies and practices,
- Ensure sufficient storage infrastructure for today and tomorrow’s vaccines by equipping storage points with the right equipment suitable for the environmental conditions, with continuous temperature monitoring and sustainable maintenance systems,
- Implement a pull-based distribution system for vaccines with reliable transport systems organized around efficient network redesign and route planning.

To ensure implementation of cEVM-IP, Pakistan’s Federal and Provincial Management and Monitoring Committees (PMMC) will be established. Recognising that data quality depends on “last mile” systems, Pakistan will leverage the eHealth roadmap process to identify digital data solutions to strengthen service delivery. As a next step, the cEVM-IP will be linked to National and Provincial budgets with support through the upcoming Gavi HSS grant.

Advances & Challenges with Measles Elimination: Dialogue with the Experts

Pamela Bravo and Desiree Pastor, PAHO-WDC

During the Ad-hoc Meeting of the International Expert Committee on Measles and Rubella elimination in the Americas, and as a pre-launch to Vaccination Week in the Americas, on 23 April 2015, PAHO/WHO broadcast a special technical session via Livestream to discuss the Advances & Challenges with Measles Elimination in the Region. The discussion was followed by a question and answer session for health personnel in the Ministries of Health in the Region.

The recording of sessions, in both English and Spanish, will be available shortly on the VWA website: English and Spanish.
An update from the Immunization Systems Management Group (IMG)
Progress on objective 2 of the Polio Eradication and Endgame Strategic Plan 2013-2018
By Meg Farrell (UNICEF) and Lisa Menning (WHO)

To oversee activities within the scope of objective 2 of the Polio Endgame Plan, the IMG was formed in 2013 with representatives from UNICEF, WHO, Gavi, Rotary International, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, CDC, USAID, the Task Force for Global Health, and CHAI. Drawing on its recent discussions, here is a summary update covering the latest progress and priorities of the IMG.

**IPV introduction**

Overall the introduction of IPV is on track. 18 of 126 countries have already introduced IPV, with the remainder expected in 2015. All 71 Gavi-eligible countries that applied for support have been approved.

**IPV supply**

Due to reductions in the initial production volumes of IPV from both manufacturers contracted by UNICEF, the allocation of IPV will be carefully balanced in the coming year.
- Discussions are underway with countries that may be impacted. 13 have been asked to delay.
- Constraints until mid-2015 will be managed by postponing the buffer stock shipments to specific countries by a few months.
- IPV-containing hexavalent vaccines with aP are also supply constrained until 2018 earliest.

**The switch from tOPV to bOPV**

Given the expected switch date of April 2016, preparations are now in an intensive phase, including the development of guidance materials. Meeting discussions covered:
- Updates on preparations per region and functional area
- A potential mechanism to offer targeted financial support, based on risk level and income status
- Supply considerations: sufficient bOPV is expected
- UNICEF is tracking tOPV shipments and tOPV quantities remaining, to support stock management

**Countries are encouraged to develop their switch plans by September 2015.** To support country planning, operational guidelines will be available in late April through the [objective 2 website](http://www.who.int/immunization/diseases/poliomyelitis/endgame_objective2/en/).

**Routine immunization (RI)**

A theme underlying all discussions is the opportunity for RI strengthening, with emphasis on the 10 focus countries with significant polio assets. The meeting covered updates on ongoing RI strengthening activities in the 10 focus countries, as well as strategies for using IPV introduction to help address gaps in coverage and equity.

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**What materials are available?**

**IPV introduction:**
- Policy and planning resources
- Considerations for multiple injections
- Communications planning guide
- Issues management and media kit
- Health worker training modules and job aid
- Memo and job aid on the MDVP change

**OPV switch:**
- Briefing note
- Frequently asked questions
- Summary Powerpoint
- Fact sheet on VAPP and VDPV

**More switch materials - coming soon:**
- National operational guidelines
- Stock management guide
- Communications planning guide
- Issues management and media kit
- Health worker training module and job aid
- Guide to monitoring and validation

All are in English and French, and in formats that are easily adaptable for the local context.

**Where to find these resources?**
http://www.who.int/immunization/diseases/poliomyelitis/endgame_objective2/en/
Upcoming Meeting

Fifth Asian Vaccine Conference (ASVAC 2015): “Introducing More Vaccines and Reaching Everyone”

Lulu C. Bravo, Immunization Partners in Asia Pacific

Location: Hanoi, Vietnam
Date: 12-14 June 2015

Participants: Asia-Pacific Advisory Committee on Influenza (APACI), International Vaccine Access Center (IVAC), Como-Conederation of Meningitis Organizations, ROTA Council, IVI-International Vaccine Institute, Asian Strategic Alliance for Pneumococcal Disease Prevention (ASAP), Immunization Partners in Asia Pacific (IPAP), National Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology (NIHE Vietnam)

Purpose: Designed for healthcare and medical professionals to share their knowledge, strategies and experience to tackle the challenge of introducing new vaccines and scaling up existing vaccines in National Immunisation Programmes.

Themed "Introducing More Vaccines and Reaching Everyone", the Conference aims to address:

- New vaccine recommendations, schedules and justifications
- Target populations, implementation and delivery strategies
- Opportunities and Challenges
- Coordination, partnerships and advocacy
- Costs and funding
- Key activities incl. expanding health worker capacity, reaching the hard-to-reach, improving logistics.

Details: The three-day Conference will feature important presentations by a wide range of expert speakers and opinion leaders from around the world who will assemble in Hanoi with the common objective of engaging stakeholders to expand and improve immunisation coverage in the region.

Past Meetings/Workshops

National Workshop for Immunization Monitoring and Data Quality

Ignacio VillaseNor, Verónica Carrión and Diana Carpio, Ministry of Health, Mexico and Tamara Mancero, Emilia Cáin, Carolina Danovaro, Gabriela Felix, Cuauhtémoc Ruiz, and Martha Velandia, Pan American Health Organization

Location: San Miguel de Regla, Hidalgo, Mexico
Date: 25-27 March 2015

Participants: Mexico’s Director and staff from the National Center for Childhood and Adolescent Health; staff from the Health Statistics Department; health authorities from the state of Hidalgo; representatives from the immunization programme, the social security and other health providers from all 32 federative entities (states); and seven facilitators from PAHO.

Purpose: 1) To systematize the use of tools for the routine assessment of administrative coverage figures and data quality in all Mexican states.
2) To train participants on the use of rapid convenience monitoring for routine immunization
3) To consolidate the necessary processes for systematic immunization monitoring and supervision.

Details: The workshop was developed based on recommendations aimed at strengthening the regular monitoring of immunization data and training of all stakeholders, following the August 2014 EPI review/ data quality assessment conducted in Mexico.

Modules 1 to 4 of the new toolbox for the Integrated Monitoring of Coverage of Vaccination and other Integrated Interventions (see the November 2013 issue of the GIN), developed by PAHO, were used to guide the workshop. Training methods included presentations, examples given during plenary sessions and work on practical exercises in smaller groups, using data from each participating state.

Workshop participants rated the workshop very highly and are committed to working on improving data monitoring and data quality in their states.
Harnessing the Power of Immunization: Opportunities and Challenges for New Vaccines in India

Margaret Miller, International Vaccine Access Center and Deep Thacker, Child Health Foundation

Location: Kochi, Kerala, India

Date: 25-26 April 2015

Participants: More than 50 participants and faculty that included private practice pediatricians, state immunization officials, and government representatives from the states of: Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Telangana.

The workshop was endorsed by the Indian Academy of Pediatrics and coordinated by Child Health Foundation, International Vaccines Access Center (IVAC), and Global Health Strategies.

Purpose: For participants to understand and to be able to communicate the evidence base for the new vaccine recommendations announced by the Government of India, the broader value of vaccines including the impact on cognitive and physical development, and the importance of routine immunization.

Details: The Child Health Foundation of India, IVAC, and Global Health Strategies hosted a regional workshop with the Indian Academy of Pediatrics on 25-26 April 2015 in Kochi, India to discuss progress and challenges around the new vaccines scheduled to be introduced in India’s routine immunization programme. Topics included: rotavirus, measles-rubella, and IPV, as well as vaccines on the horizon including pneumococcal conjugate vaccine.

This workshop, hosted at the onset of World Immunization Week (24-30 April), engaged participants in dynamic sessions and discussions around technical evidence, programmatic issues, and media engagement. Sessions focused on improving routine immunization coverage; understanding the evidence of the disease burden (rotavirus, measles, pneumococcus) and efficacy and safety of new vaccines; reviewing surveillance systems for adverse events following immunization; and, hands on media training. The participants have the tools and information to support their advocacy efforts for a comprehensive approach including vaccines, to diarrhoea and pneumonia, two leading killers of India’s children under five years of age, prevention.
WHO Informal Consultation on the Stability Evaluation of Vaccines for use in a Controlled Temperature Chain

Jongwon Kim and Ivana Knezevic, WHO Headquarters; James Southern, Medicines Control Council, South Africa

Location: Geneva, Switzerland

Date: 24 March 2015

Participants: Thirty eight participants comprising: a) representatives from the National Regulatory Authority (NRA) of Belgium, Brazil, China (P.R.), Cuba, France, Ghana, India, Korea (Rep.), Netherlands and Nigeria, b) vaccine developers and manufacturers as representatives from the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers & Associations (IFPMA) and Developing Countries Vaccine Manufacturers Network (DCVMN) and one Vaccine Vial Monitors (VVM) manufacturer, c) international experts from the National Institute for Biological Standards and Control (UK), Health Canada, Pau-Ehrlich-Institute (Germany), Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research, Food and Drug Administration (USA) and Advisor to Medicines Control Council (South Africa), and d) staff from the World Health Organization.

Purpose: a) To review a second draft of WHO guidelines and consult with experts from NRAs and industry on scientific and regulatory practice and perspectives, and b) To discuss a workplan for further development of the draft document to be submitted to the Expert Committee on Biological Standardization (ECBS) in 2015.

Details: The use of vaccines in countries with high ambient temperatures is complicated by the need to maintain conditions during storage and transport that are within the limits approved to ensure the quality, safety and efficacy of the vaccine. Through the development of the “Controlled Temperature Chain” concept, an example exists for a single vaccine where a monitored limited exposure to higher temperatures and for a defined time period immediately before use has been proven.

To supplement the existing guideline on vaccine stability [TRS 962], a document was drafted to provide general methods for the evaluation of stability under extended temperature ranges during short term storage – within the approved shelf-life of a vaccine product. Appendices include real-life examples of the methods used. This guideline will guide regulators who must approve labelling changes which will include these storage conditions.

Experts, regulators and representatives of vaccine manufacturing organizations joined the WHO drafting group to discuss the current draft and comments received from critical reviewers. The drafting group continued to refine the text of the second draft that will be published on 11 May 2015 for public comments. The intention is to present a final draft guideline to the ECBS in October 2015.

It has been agreed that for future regulatory purposes the appropriate term for this process would be the “Extended Controlled Temperature Conditions” (ECTC).
Orientation Workshop on Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) Vaccination Demonstration Programmes

Santosh Gurung, WHO Country Office, Nepal

Location: Kathmandu, Nepal

Date: 29 March - 1 April 2015

Participants: Sixty-seven participants representing six countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Nepal), technical focal points and resource persons from WHO, UNICEF, CDC, UNFPA, GAVI and PATH attended the workshop.

Purpose:
(a) to share global and national experiences in the introduction of HPV vaccine; (b) brief the participants on principles, strategies and plans related to cervical cancer prevention and control including the role of HPV vaccines; (c) present specific tools for ADH assessments, evaluation methods and encourage integration/interfacing other adolescent health and cervical cancer prevention programmes with HPV vaccine demonstration programmes; and (d) define lessons learned from countries already introduced for other countries that are not yet introduced.

Details: In preparation for the introduction of HPV vaccination across the Region, a workshop was held from 29 March - 1 April 2015 in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Topics covered included HPV and cervical cancer epidemiology, adolescent health (ADH) issues, and vaccine characteristics. In addition to a review of technical issues, participants also engaged in working groups to discuss initial country plans for GAVI applications as well as review four evaluation components - ADH, coverage, post introduction evaluation (PIE), costing analysis (C4P), and budget and financial management.

Countries also had an opportunity to share their plans on HPV vaccination introduction. Of note from the country presentations were frequent use of school-based delivery to access school girls, while health facility-based delivery accessed non-school attending girls. Additionally, the integration of selected adolescent health interventions, information education and communication for cervical cancer screening with HPV vaccination.
First National Meeting on Integrating Electronic Immunization Registries – National Directorate for the Control of Vaccine-preventable Diseases (DiNaCEI) and SUMAR Programme

Martín Sabignoso and Carla Vizzotti, Ministry of Health, Argentina; Analía Aquino, Carolina Danovaro and Mirta Magarinos, Pan American Health Organization

Location: Buenos Aires, Argentina

Date: 21 April 2015

Participants: Argentina’s Vice-Minister for Community Health; Argentina’s Vice-Minister for Health Promotion and Programs; Representatives of Argentina’s Ministry of Health (MOH) National Directorate for the Control of Vaccine-preventable Diseases (DiNaCEI) and coordinator of SUMAR; Health Information System, Immunization and SUMAR representatives from each of the country’s 24 Provincial Ministries of Health; and representatives from the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO).

From left to right: Dr Carla Vizzotti, National Director for the Control of Vaccine-preventable Diseases; Dr Nicolas Kreplak, Secretary of Community Health; Dr Federico Kaski Fullone, Secretary of Promotion and Health Programmes; Dr Martin Sabignoso, National Coordinator for the SUMAR Programme (MOH Programme charged with ensuring health coverage and promoting access to and the quality of priority health interventions).

Purpose: 1) To share the progress made on integrating the national electronic immunization registry (EIR) with the operations and monitoring and evaluation of the SUMAR programme. SUMAR is a MOH programme charged with ensuring health coverage and promoting access to, and the quality of, priority health interventions. 2) To discuss achievements, challenges and next steps in the implementation of the national EIR and data transfers from provincial EIRs.

Details: Participants met to discuss the progress and challenges in the country’s efforts to roll-out the national EIR, which includes direct use of the national EIR in 12 provinces and loading data from the provincial EIRs of the other 12 provinces via Web. Additionally, integrating the immunization registry with the functionalities related to ensuring SUMAR performance-based resource transfers was covered. The roll-out of the national EIR, and its integration with SUMAR, is a priority for the MOH. This is reflected in the provision of government resources and the engagement of various vice-ministries in the endeavour.

Some highlights of the meeting included working group discussions and dynamic exercises, the latter facilitated by a psychologist specialized on change and organizational development. At the end of the meeting, participants were asked to respond to the following questions: 1) What are the main challenges to having timely and quality immunization data? 2) What should be the role of each actor and level in addressing those challenges? 3) What is a concrete activity that each person (or in collaboration with others), could commit to doing to address those challenges? And what are specific areas of difficulty for integration at the sub-national level and what could the national level do to support the provinces?
Training of Medical Personnel in Surveillance for Vaccine Preventable Diseases

Julietta Frederick-Cassius; Karen Lewis-Bell; Carolina Danovaro, Ministry of Health, St. Lucia and PAHO

Location: Castries, St. Lucia
Date: 6 February 2015
Participants: Medical doctors and other health care workers from the public and private sector, St. Lucia
Purpose: The purpose of the training workshop was to ensure the maintenance of elimination of measles, rubella and polio in St. Lucia through increasing the knowledge, skills and attitudes of medical and other personnel in the surveillance and reporting for vaccine preventable diseases (VPDs).

Details: A one day training workshop targeting medical and nursing personnel from primary and secondary health care facilities in both the public and private sector was conducted to build awareness of participants on the importance of strengthening surveillance for vaccine preventable diseases in keeping with the PAHO resolution CSP28.R14 for maintaining the elimination of measles and rubella in the Americas.

The format of the meeting involved an overview of the EPI program in St. Lucia and technical updates on VPDs, the surveillance system and reporting indicators for measles, rubella, CRS and polio. Presentations were made by the EPI Manager and National Epidemiologist of St. Lucia, as well as by PAHO EPI Advisors. A total of 23 individuals attended the meeting, including twelve medical doctors and visiting EPI managers from Barbados and Jamaica.

The training was very well accepted by all the participants and the presentations generated much vibrant discussion and questions. The participants expressed their commitment to enhancing VPD
JRF and APR Peer Review Workshop

A. Ambendet, A. Ndiaye and N. Ngendabanyikwa, WHO IST Central; Laure Dumolard, WHO Headquarters; LN Aka, Consultant WHO IST Central

Location: Kinshasa, DRC
Date: 23-27 March 2015
Participants: 80 participants from 11 countries (Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Congo, DRC, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Madagascar and Sao Tome and Principe) and nine countries for the APR (except Equatorial Guinea and Gabon).

Facilitation was provided by WHO (IST and Headquarters), UNICEF/WCAR, Gavi and CDC Atlanta.

Purpose: To improve the quality of the reports that countries present to WHO and UNICEF jointly (JRF) and annual progress reports (APRs) for 2014 through a peer review and capacity-building process.

Details: The peer review workshop format was established in 2007 to help Gavi-eligible countries to improve the quality of their submissions for the introduction of new and underused vaccines.

With the adoption of GVAP, a framework for monitoring, evaluation and accountability was established. One of the sources of information available to measure progress at the country level is the JRF. However, the analysis of the JRFs transmitted by countries shows some weaknesses. Taking into account these and the importance of this tool in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of GVAP, the need to strengthen the capacity of countries in completing this important tool was strengthened. The peer review also included the APRs this year.

The workshop included plenary sessions, and group work for the peer review of documents and integration of comments by country teams.

The main results were that the 2014 JRFs and APRs were analyzed identifying strengths and weaknesses; comments and suggestions for improvements have been incorporated into the documents; a timetable has been produced by each country to finalize the validation and formal transmission of documents by Health Ministers on time; and final steps for countries to submit their JRFs and APRs by the required date.
Resources

Guidelines for enterovirus surveillance in support of the Polio Eradication Initiative

Catharina de Kat-Reynen, Consultant EURO

The strategy for achieving polio eradication and maintaining the polio-free status until global certification of eradication is complete has two major components: establishing high population immunity to polioviruses through immunization, and detecting and rapidly responding to poliovirus cases through high-sensitivity surveillance. While surveillance for acute flaccid paralysis is considered the “gold standard” for countries that were endemic or recently endemic for poliovirus, other surveillance strategies and data have been accepted from countries with a long history of non-endemicity, high levels of sanitation and strong health systems, including combinations of: surveillance for “poliomyelitis cases” and cases of vaccine-associated paralytic poliomyelitis, environmental surveillance for polioviruses and/or enterovirus surveillance.

These guidelines, devised by the WHO Regional Office for Europe and the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), provide national decision-makers and their technical advisors with information on the principles and practices of adopting enterovirus surveillance to support the Polio Eradication Initiative. The guidelines will help support decision-making related to establishing an enterovirus surveillance system or modifying existing systems, to meet both disease-control and programmatic requirements.

Launch of the WHO/Europe workbook: Mobilizing resources for immunization

Katrine Bach Habersaat, WHO EURO

Adopting the European Vaccine Action Plan 2015-2020 and Resolution EUR/RC64/R5 in September 2014, Member States pledged to ensure long-term domestic funding of immunization programmes, sustainable financial investment and political commitment to immunization. They also called for strategic direction and guidance in this field.

In line with this, WHO/Europe has now developed a workbook on resource mobilization to support immunization programmes in their effort to ensure sustainable funding for immunization.

Engaging Member States

The Mobilizing resources for immunization workbook was developed based on the active engagement of national immunization managers and partners. This included in-country consultations and discussions with national immunization programme managers, a test-training workshop with nine Member States and several presentations and discussions at meetings with regional and global partners.

It was launched during European Immunization Week, which took place 20-25 April 2015.

Supporting documents and training

To support the use of the workbook, a set of immunization advocacy documents and a training package are also being developed. The full package offered to Member States thus offers three elements:

- **Workbook**: A process description which can help immunization programme staff plan and carry out resource mobilization activities.

- **Immunization advocacy library**: A set of advocacy documents containing a variety of templates, facts, presentations, messages and frequently asked questions. Can be tailored to the national context and applied in resource mobilization activities.

- **Training package**: WHO/Europe will offer resource mobilization training to national immunization programme and ministry of health managers and staff. The first two sub-regional training workshops are planned for June 2015 and November 2015.

Translation

Once tested, the workbook will be translated and is expected to be available in Russian in the fourth quarter of 2015.
Launch Event/Webinar for the “Expanding the evidence base to inform vaccine introduction: programme costing and cost-effectiveness analyses” supplement to Vaccine

Ana Gabriela Felix Garcia and Cara Janusz, Pan American Health Organization

The Pan American Health Organization’s (PAHO) ProVac Initiative has coordinated the publication of a second supplement to the journal Vaccine. The first supplement, titled “Evidence Base for Vaccine Introduction in Latin America and the Caribbean”, was published in July 2013. It is available online to subscribers via the journal’s website.

This second supplement, titled “Expanding the evidence base to inform vaccine introduction: program costing and cost-effectiveness analyses”, features country-led research to support real-time policymaking, including cost-effectiveness analyses, program costing analyses, financial flows analyses, among others.

Work carried out by partner organizations collaborating in the ProVac International Working Group, as well as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation-led Multi-country Costing and Financing of Routine Immunization and New Vaccines (EPIC) initiative is also featured throughout the supplement. A total of 31 original research articles and four perspective articles provide reflection on the role and use of economic evidence for decision making are included.

Among the original research articles, the supplement includes results from 14 ProVac country-led cost-effectiveness analyses and 9 EPIC country costing and financial flows analyses. The four perspective pieces highlight themes such as the potential role of cost-effectiveness analyses in vaccine price negotiations; the continued need for models and methodological approaches that can be adapted for use in low resource policy settings; and the juxtaposition of supporting country-level decision making in the context of donor priority setting. This supplement adds much needed evidence to the field and provides an opportunity to highlight country-led work.

Funding for the supplement was supported by a Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation grant to PAHO.

A Webinar will be held on 12 May 2015 to launch the supplement and provide an open forum for discussion with the editorial team and authors. The virtual meeting will begin at 10am EDT, and can be accessed at this link. Interested readers based in Washington, DC are cordially invited to participate in-person. The Webinar will be streamed from PAHO Headquarters (room B). All in-person participants must RSVP by 8 May 2015. To RSVP, please contact Ms Susana Asmat.
## Calendar

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<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<td><strong>May</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>Gavi Programme &amp; Policy Committee</td>
<td>Geneva, Switzerland</td>
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<td>11-13</td>
<td>Gavi High Level Review Panel (HLRP)</td>
<td>Geneva, Switzerland</td>
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<td>11-15</td>
<td>2015 Technet Consultation</td>
<td>TBD, Thailand</td>
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<td>18-26</td>
<td>68th World Health Assembly</td>
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<td>27-28</td>
<td>Measles and Rubella lab network</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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<tr>
<td>30-2 May</td>
<td>9th International Conference on Typhoid and other invasive salmonellosis</td>
<td>Bali, Indonesia</td>
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<td><strong>June</strong></td>
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<td>9-12</td>
<td>WPRO Twenty-Fourth Meeting of the Technical Advisory Group on Immunization and Vaccine-Preventable Diseases (TAG)</td>
<td>Manila, Philippines</td>
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<td>Gavi Alliance Board Meeting</td>
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<td>SEARO Technical Advisory Group Meeting</td>
<td>New Delhi, India (?)</td>
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<td>23-25</td>
<td>Global Immunization Meeting : Protect, Innovate, Accelerate (PIA) Meeting</td>
<td>Sitges, Spain</td>
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<td>AFRO Task Force on Immunization (TFI)</td>
<td>Addis Ababa, Ethiopia</td>
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<td>29-2</td>
<td>Global Measles and Rubella Laboratory Network Meeting</td>
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<td>PAHO Technical Advisory Group Meeting</td>
<td>Varadero, Cuba</td>
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<td>20-24</td>
<td>Gavi High Level Review Panel (HLRP)</td>
<td>Geneva, Switzerland</td>
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<td><strong>September</strong></td>
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<td>EURO VPI Programme Managers’ Meeting</td>
<td>Antwerp, Belgium</td>
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<td>3-4</td>
<td>EURO Polio EPI and Lab Managers’ Meeting</td>
<td>Antwerp, Belgium</td>
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<td>30-2 Oct</td>
<td>European Technical Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization (ETAGE)</td>
<td>Copenhagen, Denmark</td>
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<td><strong>October</strong></td>
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<td>7-8</td>
<td>Gavi Programme and Policy Committee</td>
<td>Geneva, Switzerland</td>
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<td>14-15</td>
<td>Immunization Practices Advisory Committee (IPAC) meeting</td>
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<td>14-16</td>
<td>Gavi High Level Review Panel (HLRP)</td>
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<td>20-22</td>
<td>Meeting of the Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE) on Immunization</td>
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<td><strong>November</strong></td>
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<td>6-20</td>
<td>Gavi Independent Review Committee (IRC) for new proposals</td>
<td>Geneva, Switzerland</td>
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<td><strong>December</strong></td>
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<td>2-3</td>
<td>Gavi Board Meeting</td>
<td>Geneva, Switzerland</td>
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Links

Organizations and Initiatives

American Red Cross
Child Survival

Agence de Médecine Préventive
Africhol
EpiVacPlus
LOGIVAC Project
SIVAC

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Polio
Global Vaccines and Immunization

Johns Hopkins
International Vaccine Access Center
Vaccine Information Management System

JSI
Africa Routine Immunization Systems Essentials Project
IMMUNIZATIONbasics
Maternal and Child Health Integrated Program (MCHIP)

PAHO
ProVac Initiative

PATH
Vaccine Resource Library
Rotavirus Vaccine Access and Delivery
Malaria Vaccine Initiative
Meningitis Vaccine Project
RHO Cervical Cancer

WHO Regional Websites
Routine Immunization and New Vaccines (AFRO)
Immunization (PAHO)
Vaccine-preventable diseases and immunization (EMRO)
Vaccines and immunization (EURO)
Immunization (SEARO)
Immunization (WPRO)

UNICEF Regional Websites
Immunization (Central and Eastern Europe)
Immunization (Eastern and Southern Africa)
Immunization (South Asia)
Immunization (West and Central Africa)
Child survival (Middle East and Northern Africa)
Health and nutrition (East Asia and Pacific)
Health and nutrition (Americas)

Newsletters

Immunization Monthly update in the African Region (AFRO)
Immunization Newsletter (PAHO)
The Civil Society Dose (GAVI CSO Constituency)
TechNet Digest
RotaFlash (PATH)
Gavi Programme Bulletin (Gavi)

Sabin Vaccine Institute
Sustainable Immunization Financing

UNICEF
Immunization
Supplies and Logistics

USAID
Maternal and Child Health Integrated Program

WHO
Department of Immunization, Vaccines & Biologicals
New and Under-utilized Vaccines Implementation
ICO Information Centre on HPV and Cancer
Immunization financing
Immunization service delivery
Immunization surveillance, assessment and monitoring
SIGN Alliance

Other
Coalition Against Typhoid
Dengue Vaccine Initiative
European Vaccine Initiative
Gardasil Access Program
Gavi the Vaccine Alliance
International Association of Public Health Logisticians
International Vaccine Institute
Measles & Rubella Initiative
Multinational Influenza Seasonal Mortality Study
TechNet-21
Vaccines Today

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