The fifth annual Global Immunization Meeting was held in Geneva from 1 to 3 February, 2010. The objectives of this meeting were: to update on progress of the Global Immunization Vision and Strategy (GIVS) and the global immunization and mortality reduction goals in the overall framework of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) ; to share policy decisions and recommendations from the Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE) and other technical/advisory bodies; and to provide the WHO and UNICEF global and regional staff, as well as immunization partner representatives, with technical updates focusing on the programmatic issues related to the global immunization efforts, including reaching the unreached. The presentations were wide ranging and covered a variety of topics, including introduction of new vaccines, immunization financing, health system strengthening, etc. The presentations have been uploaded on the TechNet21 website and can be accessed by selecting the specific title.

Technical Information

ENHANCED FUNCTIONALITY OF IVB ON-LINE DOCUMENT CENTRE
26/02/2010 from Alison Brunier, WHO/HQ:

The Document Centre of WHO's Immunization, Vaccines and Biologicals Department now includes a database to facilitate searching for documents published by the Department. Searches by language and title are possible. The catalogue listing all of the Department's publications (generated on a daily basis), which includes a short summary of all documents, document numbers, and an indication of language versions, can also be accessed here. Lists of documents produced in a given year are another feature. Users are invited to provide feedback on individual documents or the Document Centre in general through this function. Hard copies of documents posted on the Document Centre can be ordered from vaccines@who.int.
NEW AND UNDER UTILIZED VACCINES IMPLEMENTATION RETREAT
26/02/2010 from Gill Mayers, WHO/HQ:

At the time of the GIM, the New Vaccines Retreat was held on 4 February for an exchange of information on new vaccines issues with WHO and UNICEF HQ and Regional Focal Points and other key immunization partners. Following is a summary of the discussions:

- Feedback was provided from Regional Focal points identifying the main programmatic impediments to the introduction of Hib, pneumococcal and rotavirus vaccines and outlining their priorities for the first 6 months of 2010 and activities they will be conducting to overcome some of these impediments.
- A summary was given on key results from the Post-Introduction Evaluations conducted in 2009, that concluded that the substitution of DTP with the pentavalent combination vaccine had generally gone quite smoothly, but that immunization programmes in many countries were showing weaknesses, especially in the areas of programme management and cold chain and logistics, and that enhanced attention would be needed prior to introducing an additional new vaccine to the schedule. Some of the opportunities afforded to the immunization programme by the introduction of new vaccines, such as additional resources, renewed interest in immunization, strengthening of evidence-based decision-making at national level and opportunities for refresher training were also highlighted.
- Technical updates were provided on Pneumo, Rota and HPV vaccines.
- A discussion was held on the interface between new vaccines introduction and the routine immunization system, outlining opportunities and potential threats to the latter.
- Two Regions provided case studies on experiences of country decision-making for new vaccines in four countries, the conclusion of which was that country requirements for decision-making are largely similar between countries; availability of local data on disease burden is a major factor, but cost is currently the most important factor; technical advisory groups are key resources for the decision-making process as well as involvement of paediatric associations; and opportunities need to be created to advocate around the introduction of a new vaccine - with the correct messaging.
- An overview of recent safety concerns was provided with some key recommendations for responding to such crises in countries, and a reminder of the information available on the GACVS web-site.
- Lastly, the new joint communication strategy to support countries introducing pneumococcal and rotavirus vaccines in the context of an integrated disease control strategy was presented, with the timeline for next steps in finalizing this framework intended to guide national communication strategies.

ROUTINE IMMUNIZATION REVIEW MEETING
26/02/2010 from Rudi Eggers, WHO/HQ:

Using the opportunity of the participation of many immunization experts in the Global Immunization Meeting, a Routine Immunization Review meeting was conducted on 5 February in Geneva. The purpose of the meeting was to revitalize the coordinated planning around routine immunization, and to initiate the development of a global action plan that would help guide activities in this field in the coming years. The initial part of the meeting focused on the almost philosophical discussion on the placement of the routine programme as the foundation to all other programme activities, be they the acceleration of disease control efforts (such as polio eradication) or the introduction of new vaccines into the national immunization programmes. In all cases, a vibrant routine immunization programme is a pre-requisite for success. This discussion was followed by the presentation of challenges and activities in three of the large priority countries, namely India, Indonesia and Pakistan. The afternoon session was devoted to small group discussions in relation to formulating the global action plan. The initial areas of discussion included advocacy, vaccine availability, demand creation, delivery strategies, and routine programme monitoring.
GLOBAL MEASLES MANAGEMENT MEETING
26/02/2010 from Alya Dabbagh, WHO/HQ:

Following the GiM, the Global Measles Management Meeting was held on 4 February to review progress and challenges to achieving the global measles mortality reduction goal and regional elimination goals and to review programme plans for 2010 especially for large countries and address funding and advocacy for measles control.

Although much success has been achieved since 2000 with 78% reduction in measles mortality and over 600 million vaccinated through Supplemental Immunization Activities (SIAs), a major theme of the meeting was the large funding gap of 2010 and beyond and the urgent need to rapidly mobilize resources to avoid eminent resurgence of measles.

In addition, the importance of routine immunization in achieving and sustaining measles mortality reduction were stressed (routine immunization contributed to about two thirds of reduction of measles mortality since 2000). Strategies for strengthening routine immunization were discussed with special focus on how SIAs can used to strengthen routine immunization systems.

Five countries presented their plans and progress. Of note, China presented their plans to do the largest ever SIA, targeting nearly 100 million children.

Finally, a letter was presented from former President Carter to the Measles Initiative and participants. In this, the former president informed participants that he (as part of a project of The Task Force of Global Health funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation) will help contact global Elders and African political leaders to encourage the allocation of national and International resources to sustain and extend the progress made in measles mortality reduction.

IMMUNOLOGICAL BASIS FOR IMMUNIZATION: PNEUMOCOCCAL VACCINES
26/02/2010 from Mario Conde, WHO/HQ:

This IVB document is now online. The main purpose of this document is to give vaccination professionals e.g. EPI managers, a brief and easy-to-understand overview of the scientific basis of vaccination against Streptococcus pneumoniae.

REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS: FACILITATION OF ELECTRONIC FORUM AND MANAGEMENT OF TECHNET21 WEBSITE
26/02/2010 from Jhilmil Bahl, WHO/HQ:

The World Health Organization (WHO) is soliciting requests for proposals for the ongoing management and updating of the Technical Network for Strengthening Immunization Services (TechNet21) electronic forum and website. The duration of the contract is 1 year, renewable, starting from 15 April, 2010. For more information please visit the highlight’s section here: http://www.who.int/immunization_delivery/en/ or the Technet21 website.

GAVI related Information

Next GAVI Review Dates:
Information on 2010 GAVI submission and review dates to be confirmed.
In the context of PAHO/WHO technical cooperation for the introduction of the pandemic H1N1 influenza vaccine in countries of the Americas, a workshop on ESAVI (also known as Adverse Events following Immunization AEFI) surveillance, response and crisis prevention was conducted in La Habana, Cuba from 26 to 28 January 2010. Participants included representatives from 16 Member States, from national regulatory authorities and national immunization programs. The objectives of the meeting were to strengthen ESAVI surveillance after introduction of the H1N1 influenza vaccines and strengthen coordination between national regulatory authorities and national immunization programmes. Activities included a review of the epidemiological situation of the influenza pandemic; vaccine availability and ongoing vaccination activities; discussion of the advances in each country regarding their ESAVI surveillance system; presentation of a web-based platform for ESAVI surveillance developed by PAHO; establishment of a ESAVI surveillance network based on sentinel sites monitoring severe events including Guillain-Barré Syndrome and anaphylaxis; review of the ESAVI data flow between the national regulatory authority, the national immunization programme and the international level; and development or review of national plans for crisis management and social communication regarding the use of H1N1 influenza vaccine.

Vaccination activities in Haiti include vaccination of children aged 6 weeks – 8 months with DTP and children aged 9 months – 7 years with DTP and MR, and provision of vitamin A supplementation. In addition, children aged > 8 years, adolescents and adults will receive Td. This last intervention aims to respond to a diphtheria outbreak that started in 2009 and to prevent tetanus and neonatal tetanus, which are perceived as public health problems in the country. The vaccination is scheduled to occur in two phases:

- Vaccination in temporary settlements.
- A second round to vaccinate the entire population in affected areas, once the situation has stabilized.
Country Information by Region

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN REGION:

TUNISIA TO DEMONSTRATE INNOVATIVE SUPPLY CHAIN SOLUTIONS FOR THE FUTURE
26/02/2010 from Patrick Lydon, WHO/HQ and Simona Zipursky, PATH

A new era of immunization supply systems officially got underway on Friday 22 January in Tunis, when the Ministry of Public Health, the World Health Organization (WHO) and Project Optimize formally signed a cooperative agreement. The three-year project, with a budget US$1.75 million, will focus on five key intervention areas:
1. Demonstrate the benefits of streamlining and integrating the supply chains for vaccines, drugs, and other temperature-sensitive products between national and regional levels.
2. Demonstrate the benefits of a "Zero Energy Cost Supply Chain" below regional level by using solar energy to generate and feed into the grid the equivalent amount of the energy required for warehousing and transportation (using electric vehicles).
3. Modernize and improve the information systems that accompany the streamlining and integration solutions listed above.
4. Develop case studies on private-sector supply chains for vaccines and understand the role the private sector might play in the future.
5. Establish policies that promote adoption and scale up of successful Optimize interventions in Tunisia (and, where applicable, in the Eastern Mediterranean Region), and to develop a national long-term vision describing how vaccine supply systems will evolve to overcome future challenges.

This work feed into informing Tunisia’s vision for its future supply chain, one which is streamlined, integrated, supported by modern information systems, linked and learning from the private sector, as appropriate, and utilizing a ‘zero energy-cost supply chain’ where feasible, thereby increasing its responsiveness and effectiveness for both routine and emergency requests.

EUROPEAN REGION:
26/02/2010 from Robb Butler, WHO/EURO

MEASLES ELIMINATION IN THE WHO EUROPEAN REGION

The Member States of the WHO European Region are committed to a goal of measles and rubella elimination by 2010. The WHO Regional Office for Europe held an internal technical consultation on the regional verification of measles and rubella elimination in Copenhagen during 26-27 January 2010. An expert panel was constituted to review draft documents and presentations, followed by in-depth discussions, in order to assist WHO EURO to initiate the process of documenting progress towards measles and rubella elimination in each country. Representatives from WHO HQ, AMRO and WPRO also shared their experience and advice on this issue. A framework has been drafted to guide the regional verification process by describing the steps required to document elimination, which to some extent follow the model used for the regional certification of poliomyelitis elimination. The framework calls for the establishment of Regional and National Verification Commissions, and defines the programmatic indicators that must be monitored and targets that must be achieved in order to demonstrate elimination in each country and, eventually, in the whole region. Two draft national self-assessment tools developed by WHO EURO and by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) were also reviewed. The next step in this process will be to hold a country consultation to endorse the framework, which will be scheduled in April or May 2010.
Country Information by Region

EUROPEAN REGION:
26/02/2010 from Robb Butler, WHO/EURO

EUROPEAN IMMUNIZATION WEEK 2010

The momentum on the important – and achievable – goal to eliminate measles and rubella by 2010 has stalled in recent years. Measles coverage in many western European countries has fallen below the recommended 95% and measles has made a comeback, with ongoing outbreaks in the western part of the Region. In a few short months, the fifth European Immunization Week (EIW) will take place from 24 April to 1 May. We hope that, with Member States’ assistance, we will be able to take the opportunity of EIW 2010 to focus on what countries in the Region need to do to achieve the measles elimination goal. This year, WHO EURO is leveraging innovative web-based and traditional communication methods to advocate for the 2010 measles and rubella elimination goal. The initiative will launch an online ‘community’ concept that WHO EURO intends to build upon over the coming years. For 2010 the campaign will consist of a web-cast video conference; launch of a Wikipedia page for EIW; a real-time online EIW diary for the week; and a host of statements from public health sector immunization champions. A small booth will also be erected at Copenhagen Airport to contact passengers both leaving from and arriving in Denmark with key messages related to immunization. If successful, this activity will be scaled-up in subsequent years and used to encourage other European Regional air transport hubs (e.g. Heathrow, Vienna, Istanbul) to work alongside Member States and WHO during EIW. All activities will be interlinked and complemented by the EIW 2010 website. This site will present materials and messages, myths about vaccination, questions and answers, and links to recent reports on outbreaks of measles in the European Region. Additional WHO corporate and technical communication products and publications will support the week by spotlighting key messages and reviewing topical articles. The 2010 goal is a vital and attainable goal, but it will only be met if individual countries, and the Region as a whole, make a focused and concerted effort to achieve it. We urge you to contact your local EIW focal point to see how you can get involved.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with any questions or issues regarding EIW 2010. The WHO European Regional Office point person in Copenhagen for EIW 2010 is Chelsea Hedquist and she can be reached at eiw2010@euro.who.int.

SOUTH EAST ASIA REGION:
26/02/2010 from Nihal Abeyesinghe, WHO/SEARO:

RE-LAUNCH OF PENTAVALENT VACCINE IN SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka introduced Quinvaxem liquid pentavalent vaccine [DTwP-HepB-Hib] procured through UNICEF with GAVI support in January 2008. However, due to reports of a few serious adverse events following immunization (AEFIs), the use of the vaccine was temporarily suspended in May 2008 as a precautionary measure. Investigations into these AEFIs by both the Ministry of Health and World Health Organization including a WHO appointed external panel have ruled out the possibility of causal relationship with the vaccine and the country re-introduced pentavalent vaccine [Quinvaxem Liquid] back into the National EPI on 1 February 2010.
Country Information by Region

WESTERN PACIFIC REGION
26/02/2010 from Manju Rani, WHO/WPRO:

ORGANIZATION OF A SCIENTIFIC SEMINAR ON HEPATITIS B, VIETNAM

The Ministry of Health of Vietnam in collaboration with WHO and PATH organized a high-level scientific seminar on hepatitis B, targeted at high-level policy makers and programme managers on 26 February, 2010. The seminar was chaired by Prof Trinh Quan Huan, Honorable Vice Minister of Health, Vietnam. The seminar aimed to provide detailed scientific information on mechanisms of mother to child transmission of hepatitis B and the scientific rationale of strategies proposed for prevention of chronic hepatitis B infection in the newborn following mother to child transmission. International hepatitis B experts from China, the Republic of Korea and Thailand participated in the seminar and presented data on the impact of hepatitis B immunization programmes, including administration of the birth dose within 24 hours of birth, which led to a reduction in chronic hepatitis B infection rates to less than 2% among children born after the start of nationwide vaccination programmes. All three countries reported no serious adverse events following immunization at birth. The presentations consisted of scientific data on virological and immunological characteristics of hepatitis B virus, summary results from more than 30 clinical trials on efficacy of hepatitis B vaccine in preventing mother to child transmission and successful experience from neighboring countries.

EFFORTS TO ELIMINATE MATERNAL AND NEONATAL TETANUS (MNT) IN LAO PEOPLE’S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC AND PHILIPPINES:

Lao PDR
Three rounds of TT Supplementary Immunization Activities (TT SIAs) with a goal of at least 80% coverage were planned in selected high risk areas in 2009-2010 covering 99 of 142 districts in 17 provinces which were selected based on a set of risk criteria. Approximately 806,000 women of child bearing age (CBAW) are being targeted. Additionally, it is planned to vaccinate CBAW employed in factories in Vientiane Capital and other major cities. The first round of TT SIAs was conducted in November 2009 in conjunction with the bi-annual Child Health Days (CHD) with provision of de-worming treatment in addition to TT vaccination to CBAW. Reported coverage for all four interventions was high; with 91% for TT and 89% for de-worming for CBAW and 84% for vitamin A and 88% each for OPV and de-worming for children. The second round of TT SIA was planned in February 2010 along with H1N1 vaccination for pregnant women.

Philippines
The Philippines carried out an assessment (based on the WHO recommended format) in July 2009 to determine the high-risk areas to guide development of a national plan of action for MNT elimination. Nine of the total 121 areas (provinces and cities) were identified at highest risk and an additional 23 were classified at-risk. The risk status of the latter was further validated through a lot quality assessment community survey (LQA-CS) in November-December 2009. One SIA and targeted activities will be conducted in the nine “highest risk” areas in 2010 while the other areas need intensified actions for strengthening routine immunization. These include gaining political commitment (advocacy, administrative and financial support), high quality outreach activities in areas where TT1 is <90% or where recording quality is deemed poor and tracking of defaulters in areas where TT1 >90% and recording quality is good.

HSS = Health Systems Strengthening; IST = Inter Country Support Team; ISS = Immunization Services Support; INS = Injection Safety Support; NVS = New Vaccine Support; DQA = Data Quality Audit; DQS = Data Quality Self Assessment; RED = Reach Every District; cMYP = Fully costed multi-year plan; NITAG = National Immunization Technical Advisory Group; NRA = National Regulatory Authority
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Title of Meeting</th>
<th>Start</th>
<th>Finish</th>
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<td>Workshop on the Surveillance of Events Supposedly Attributable to Vaccination or Immunization (ESAVIs) Following H1N1 Vaccination and Crisis Prevention</td>
<td>Postponed</td>
<td>Postponed</td>
<td>Guyana (English-speaking Countries)</td>
<td>PAHO</td>
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<td>AFRO East &amp; South Regional Working Group Meeting</td>
<td>02-Mar</td>
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<td>American Regional Commission for Certification of Poliovirus Laboratory Containment and Verification of Poliofree Status</td>
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<td>AFRO East &amp; South EPI Managers’ Meeting</td>
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<td>West African EPI Managers Meeting</td>
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<td>The 2010 WHO HPV LabNet Training Workshop on HPV Genotyping and HPV Serology Laboratory Performance</td>
<td>15-Mar</td>
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<td>HVI Vaccine Advisory Committee meeting 2010</td>
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<td>Effective Vaccine Management (EVM) Global Training Course</td>
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<td>Rubella Consultation</td>
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<td>Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE) Meeting</td>
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<td>Regional Consultation Committee EMRO</td>
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<td>Measles Laboratory training workshop on measles/rubella virus detection and sequencing</td>
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<td>Tunis, Tunisia</td>
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<td>First Annual Immunization Week in the Eastern Mediterranean Region</td>
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<td>Annual Immunization Week in the Americas</td>
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<td>Annual Immunization Week in Europe</td>
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<td>Consultant Briefing on Surveillance, Monitoring &amp; Evaluation</td>
<td>25-Apr</td>
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<td>Human Papillomavirus Vaccine Advisory Committee</td>
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<td>Pooled Vaccine Procurement Meeting (PVP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3rd Meeting with International Partners on Prospects for Influenza Vaccine Technology Transfer to DCVMN</td>
<td>05-May</td>
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<td>Nha Trang, Vietnam</td>
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<td>IVR Vaccine Advisory Committee meeting 2010</td>
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<td>EMRO EPI Managers Meeting &amp; NTAG/RTAG</td>
<td>07-Jun</td>
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<td>Global Advisory Committee on Vaccine Safety (GACVS)</td>
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<td>Global Meeting on Implementing New and Under-utilized Vaccines</td>
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<td>SEARO Regional Consultation on Immunination</td>
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<td>Global Technical Consultation on the Feasibility of Measles Eradication</td>
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<td>Global Consultation Meeting on Feasibility of measles eradication</td>
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<td>Global Measles/Rubella LabNet Meeting</td>
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<td>Global Surveillance Meeting (TBC)</td>
<td>Sep</td>
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<td>Regional workshop on Surveillance, Monitoring &amp; Evaluation (8 Countries)</td>
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<td>Regional Committee EMRO</td>
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<td>QUIVER Meeting</td>
<td>12-Oct</td>
<td>14-Oct</td>
<td>Geneva, Switzerland</td>
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<td>Global Alliance for Vaccine &amp; Immunization (GAVI) / Regional Working Group (RWG)</td>
<td>18-Oct</td>
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<td>New vaccines and surveillance meeting</td>
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<td>Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE) Meeting</td>
<td>09-Nov</td>
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<td>Malaria Vaccine Advisory Committee meeting 2010</td>
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<td>Measles, Rubella Meeting - Laboratory Meeting - Regional Technical Advisory Group Meeting (RTAG)</td>
<td>28-Nov</td>
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<tr>
<td>Global Advisory Committee on Vaccine Safety (GACVS)</td>
<td>08-Dec</td>
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<td>Geneva, Switzerland</td>
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Links Relevant to Immunization

Global Websites

Department of Immunization, Vaccines & Biologicals, World Health Organization
WHO New Vaccines
Immunization Financing
Immunization Monitoring
Agence de Médecine Préventive
EPIVAC
GAVI Alliance Website
IMMUNIZATION basics (JSI)
International Vaccine Institute
PATH Vaccine Resource Library
Pediatric Dengue Vaccine Initiative
SABIN Sustainable Immunization Financing
SIVAC Program Website
UNICEF Supply Division Website
Hib Initiative Website
Japanese Encephalitis Resources
Malaria Vaccine Initiative
Measles Initiative
Meningitis Vaccine Project
Multinational Influenza Seasonal Mortality Study (MISMS)
RotaADIP
RHO Cervical Cancer (HPV Vaccine)
WHO/ICO Information Center on HPV and Cervical Cancer
SIGN Updates
Technet
EPIVAC Network website

Regional Websites

New Vaccines in AFRO
PAHO’s website for Immunization
Vaccine Preventable Diseases in EURO
New Vaccines in SEARO

Newsletters

PAHO/Comprehensive Family Immunization Program-FCH: Immunization Newsletter

Produced by WHO, in collaboration with UNICEF and the GAVI Alliance: