



WORLD IMMUNISATION WEEK: VACCINATION SAVES LIVES. IT MUST BE ACCESSIBLE IN ALL COUNTRIES.

Vaccination can be counted as humanity's greatest achievement. Over the last 50 years, global vaccination campaigns have helped reduce infant mortality by more than 80%.

From 24 to 30 April, World Immunisation Week aims to illustrate the successes of vaccination and raise awareness of the importance of vaccines in the fight against preventable diseases such as yellow fever, measles, and tetanus. **Recognised as one of the most effective and least costly public health interventions, vaccination prevents between 3.5 and 5 million deaths a year¹.** By preventing infections, it also enables individuals and families to reduce their healthcare costs, and helps to preserve global health security².

However, in the face of persistent challenges, the international community must continue to invest in vaccination. In 2022, more than 14 million children had never been vaccinated. Although this figure is an improvement compared to 2021, it still represents almost 1.5 million more "zero-dose children" than before the Covid-19 pandemic³. More than 2,300 people have died from cholera⁴ and more than 135,000 from measles⁵, following a 2022 resurgence of these vaccine-preventable diseases. These examples illustrate the inequality in access to vaccines, which is still all too often linked to a country's level of development. Less than a third of WHO Member States have achieved the 70% immunisation coverage target, and in low-income countries, over 60% of health workers have not completed their immunisation schedule⁶. Improving the health of the most vulnerable populations will therefore depend both on the large-scale introduction of new vaccines, but also on more equitable access to existing vaccines.

Founded in 2000, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, aims to reduce these access inequalities by encouraging manufacturers to lower the price of vaccines for the lowest-income countries, in exchange for high, predictable, long-term demand from these countries⁷. Since its creation, Gavi has saved over 17 million lives thanks to this model⁸. For over 20 years, Gavi has facilitated

¹ https://www.who.int/health-topics/vaccines-and-immunization#tab=tab_1

² <https://www.immunizationagenda2030.org/>

³ <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/immunization-coverage>

⁴ <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/cholera>

⁵ <https://www.who.int/news/item/16-11-2023-global-measles-threat-continues-to-grow-as-another-year-passes-with-millions-of-children-unvaccinated>

⁶ <https://www.who.int/campaigns/vaccine-equity#:~:text=Cela%20semble%20toujours%20impossible%2C%20jusqu. ce%20qu'on%20le%20fasse.&text=The%20team%20validated%20the%20virus.COVID%2D19%20case%20in%20Thailand.&text=En%202021%2C%20l'OMS%20a%20mi%2D2022>

⁷ <https://www.gavi.org/our-alliance/about>

⁸ <https://www.gavi.org/sites/default/files/programmes-impact/our-impact/apr/Gavi-Progress-Report-2022.pdf>

the introduction of new vaccines and the establishment of emergency stockpiles in lower-income countries, thereby increasing the number of healthy life years among those who are immunised⁹. Since 2022, Gavi has supported the introduction of vaccines against 19 infectious diseases, including HPV¹⁰, and in 2024 supported the first vaccination campaigns against malaria, one of the most deadly diseases in some developing countries.¹¹

In financial terms, 2022 represents the year with the highest ever level of co-financing of vaccine programmes between Gavi and partner countries¹². This approach, together with the allocation of 1 billion dollars to the AVMA (African Vaccine Manufacturing Accelerator)¹³, demonstrates Gavi's commitment to greater health sovereignty in the different countries and regions of the world. **There is an urgent need to address the inequalities in access to vaccines observed during Covid-19¹⁴, and to make progress towards the new public health order called for by the African Union**, which will only be met if local vaccine manufacturing is supported. Currently, only 1% of the vaccines administered on its soil are produced there.¹⁵

On 20 June 2024, a high-level event will be co-hosted in Paris by the Government of France, the African Union and Gavi, together with Team Europe partners to launch the Gavi 6.0 Investment Opportunity and the AVMA. **This represents a unique opportunity to support immunisation on a global scale, in line with the guiding principles of the EU's Global Health Strategy.** During the previous 2021-2025 funding round, the European Commission allocated €300 million in direct contributions to Gavi for their core immunisation work. This time, **the EU and its Member States must confirm their position as Gavi key donors** in order to achieve the Alliance's objectives for the period 2026-2030. **Team Europe will also have a role to play in mobilising political support from other governments** to continue investing in immunisation and thus save 7 to 8 million lives between 2026 and 2030.

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ <https://www.gavi.org/news/media-room/vaccine-alliance-outlines-path-improve-hpv-vaccine-market>

¹¹ <https://www.gavi.org/fr/vaccineswork/tournant-historique-cameroun-commence-vaccination-routine-paludisme>

¹² <https://www.gavi.org/sites/default/files/programmes-impact/our-impact/apr/Gavi-Progress-Report-2022.pdf>

¹³ <https://healthpolicy-watch.news/gavi-the-vaccine-alliance-agrees-on-1-billion-investment-in-african-vaccine-manufacturing/>

¹⁴ <https://initiatives.weforum.org/regionalized-vaccine-manufacturing-collaborative/home>

¹⁵ <https://africacdc.org/news-item/a-breakthrough-for-the-african-vaccine-manufacturing/>