

WHO Executive Board 154
Statement by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance

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Agenda Item 12 – Acceleration towards the Sustainable Development Goal targets for maternal health and child mortality

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Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, extends its appreciation for the Director General's report on Acceleration towards the Sustainable Development Goal targets for maternal health and child mortality.

As we try to identify and overcome the challenges in achieving these crucial goals, Gavi underscores the pivotal role of immunisation as a bedrock for improving child survival, bolstering primary health care platforms and achieving Universal Health Coverage.

With only six years remaining until 2030, low and middle-income countries continue to grapple with multiple crises including conflict, fragility, fiscal constraints, and climate change. The imperative to enhance the resilience of country health systems and sustain immunisation efforts has never been more pressing.

The recent uptick in coverage for the third dose of diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis-containing vaccine (DTP3) and reduction in the number of zero-dose children is commendable. However, we are still far from pre-pandemic levels, where global DTP3 coverage stood at 86%, and we know that lowest income countries have shown slower recovery trends in 2022.

In other words, much remains to be done if we are serious about reaching the goal of reducing zero-dose children by 50% by 2030 as agreed in Immunisation Agenda 2030.

Gavi therefore calls on Member States to:

1. Invest in routine immunisation, prioritize identifying and reaching zero dose children, and the Big Catch-Up initiative.
2. Introduce and scale up coverage of vaccines, as appropriate to their context, to prevent major causes of child mortality such as pneumonia, diarrhoea and measles.
3. In view of their increased availability, consider introducing malaria vaccines in malaria endemic countries, as part of comprehensive malaria control plans.