



Statement of Ireland

79th World Health Assembly

Agenda Items 11 & 12.3

Recommitting to accelerate progress towards malaria elimination and Communicable diseases

20 May 2026

**Honourable Chair,
Distinguished Director-General,
Distinguished Delegates,**

Immunisation is one of the most effective public health interventions we have available to us to protect people against harmful diseases.

Ireland's National Immunisation Programme is vitally important for protecting the health of our population and ensuring the effective functioning of our health system. The programme is informed by the advice of our National Immunisation Advisory Committee (NIAC), which provides independent, evidence-based recommendations on immunisation in the Irish context.

Ireland's National Immunisation Programme provides immunisation to eligible children and adults free of charge with a view to ensuring equitable access and reduced barriers to participation in the programme.

Ensuring high immunisation coverage is a key priority from a public health perspective.

We are delighted to note that Ireland has one of the highest flu vaccine uptake rates for older adults in Europe. Uptake in those aged 65 years and older was nearly 75% in 2024/25 influenza season which aligns with the target set for this group by the World Health Organisation.

Chair,

The proliferation of vaccine misinformation and disinformation is a major contributory factor to increased vaccine hesitancy globally. This is why we prioritise the availability of clinically accurate and accessible information to our citizens.

Ireland notes that as reported at the 158th Executive Board session, globally, the net reduction in incidence rate between 2015 and 2024 was only 12.3%, well below the End TB Strategy milestone of a 50% reduction by 2025.

In this regard Ireland, which remains a low incidence TB country, will implement a Selective BCG Vaccination programme, which is scheduled to commence in 2026, as part of Irelands five-year plan “Striving to End Tuberculosis: A Strategy for Ireland 2024–2030”, which is aligned with WHO targets of reducing incidence by 80% and deaths by 90% by 2030.

Ireland also welcomes and supports plans to develop a post 2030 TB Strategy to further align on global efforts.

Thank you Chair