



9 September 2016 – The World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean hosted some of the Organization’s most important partners on 7–8 September for a workshop to continue developing a roadmap to help countries across Africa build the political will, infrastructure and resources necessary to ensure more children have access to vaccines.

Vaccines administered under the expanded programme on immunization are a major reason that child deaths in Africa fell by more than half between 1990 and 2012, saving millions of lives. But more work is needed: currently 1 in 5 African children still lack access to life-saving vaccines.

The roadmap is part of a collaboration between WHO Regional Offices for Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean and the African Union. It evolved from the Declaration signed at the Ministerial Conference on Immunization in Africa in February. To date, 47 African Member States, including 5 of the 7 African Member States from the Eastern Mediterranean Region, have signed the Declaration.

“The meeting this week brought together most of WHO’s key partners for improving immunization coverage rates across the continent, which reflects the commitments of the partners for supporting implementation of the Addis Declaration on Immunization” said Dr Nadia Teleb, Regional Adviser, Vaccine Preventable Diseases and Immunization, WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean and co-lead facilitator of the meeting.

Representatives from Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt and Ethiopia, as well as participants from the African Union, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Centers for

Disease Control and Prevention, Clinton Health Access Initiative, Core Group Polio, Gavi, Global Health Strategies, the International Inter-Faith Peace Corporation, Kenya AIDS NGOs Consortium (KANCO), Save the Children, UNICEF, and US Agency for International Development (USAID) were some of the partners attending the meeting.

“The engagement of these partners in this project is essential for its success,” said Dr Richard Mihigo, Immunization Programme Coordinator, WHO Regional Office for Africa and co-lead facilitator of the workshop. “Africa’s routine immunization coverage is around 80%, the lowest of any region in the world so we need everyone working in this area on the ground, working together.”

The workshop concluded with remarks from Dr Ala Alwan, Regional Director for Eastern Mediterranean, who expressed support for this unprecedented collaboration between so many partners and reaffirmed the Organization’s commitment to supporting the implementation of the Declaration.

The first draft of the roadmap will be completed by the end of October and circulated to the Member States who signed the Declaration soon after.

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