



H.E. the Minister of Public Health of Lebanon Ghasan Hasbani, WHO Regional Director Dr Mahmoud Fikri and Director-General of the Ministry of Health Dr Walid Ammar visit a vaccine storage warehouse in Karantina Beirut, Lebanon, 10 April 2017 – WHO's Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean Dr Mahmoud Fikri and H.E. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Health Mr Ghasan Hasbani today launched National Immunization Week in Lebanon.

World Immunization Week is celebrated annually from 24 to 30 April by WHO and partners to promote the use of vaccines to protect people of all ages against disease.

Routine immunization is one of the most cost-effective health interventions to save millions of lives and reduce the prevalence of infectious diseases, especially among children. The main goal of this year's campaign is to raise awareness of the critical importance of full immunization throughout life, and its role in achieving the 2030 targets of the Sustainable Development Goals.

In spite of progress, 3.8 million children under one year of age in the Region are still not receiving their third dose of diphtheria-pertussis-tetanus (DPT3).

The aims of Immunization Week align with the "Global Vaccine Action Plan", which was endorsed by the 194 Member States of the World Health Assembly in 2012. The global plan serves as a roadmap to prevent millions of deaths through providing more equitable access to vaccines, especially during the early years of a child's life.

In line with the targets of the global plan, countries aim to increase vaccination coverage rates to more than 90% at national level and more than 80% in every district by 2020.

Lebanon has been reaching these coverage rates since 1986, which has enabled the country to control most childhood diseases, in particular poliomyelitis. Lebanon has not reported a case of polio for the past 14 years.

The Regional Director's tour today included a visit to a vaccine storage warehouse and cold chain unit to see for himself the measures being followed to ensure vaccine safety before and during the vaccination campaign.

Related links

[Immunization Week](#)

[Immunization coverage factsheet](#)

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