

28 February 2016 — The Ministerial Conference on Immunization in Africa, hosted by the World Health Organization's Regional Offices for Africa and for the Eastern Mediterranean, in conjunction with the African Union, took place on February 24–25 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. African leaders came together in Addis Ababa to make the conference a powerful platform for governments to demonstrate their commitment to expanding access to vaccines across the continent.

Universal access to immunization is at the forefront of enabling Africa to reach its full potential – by improving health, driving economic growth and empowering future generations. Immunization is one of the most cost-effective solutions in global health, with clear benefits for health and development. Vaccines are a major reason child deaths in Africa fell by more than half between 1990 to 2012, saving millions of lives. Immunization brings economic benefits too, reducing health care costs and increasing productivity.

On 23 February 2016 the WHO Regional Offices for Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean issued a new report which showed that despite considerable progress in expanding access to vaccines in Africa, one in 5 children on the continent still do not receive life-saving immunizations. There is growing evidence of the economic and social benefits of immunization. In addition to the potential of immunization to save lives, research suggests that meeting the projected costs of national immunization programmes is worth 16 times the original investment.

### **Related links**

[Ministerial Conference on Immunization in Africa, Addis Ababa, 24–25 February 2016](#)

[Address by Dr Ala Alwan, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean, to the African Ministerial Conference](#)

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 24–25 February 2016

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