



Vaccination Week aims to promote one of the world's most powerful tools for health – the use of vaccines to protect, or immunize, people of all ages against disease. Following the remarkable success of prior Vaccination Weeks, WHO and partners will be celebrating the fourth Vaccination Week in the Eastern Mediterranean Region from 24 to 30 April 2013.

Vaccination Week is a regional annual initiative, coinciding this year with the second World Immunization Week, to promote immunization through a range of coordinated activities, to which advocacy, education and communication activities are central. The objectives of Vaccination Week are to strengthen communication and disseminate information on the value of immunization, increase community interest and awareness of immunization and improve access to immunization for people in the Region using a combination of innovative approaches.

This year's campaign will be celebrated under the slogan "Stop Measles Now!", with the focus on measles elimination. It aims to increase the visibility of the measles elimination target with policy-makers, partners, the medical community and the public. This year's theme is especially important as all countries of the Region have set the measles elimination target for 2015.

"Measles is a highly infectious, fast-moving disease. Even though safe, effective and inexpensive vaccines are readily available today, measles continues to be one of the leading causes of child mortality around the world, accounting for about 158 000 deaths globally each

year,” highlights Dr Ala Alwan, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean. “Let us use Vaccination Week 2013 as an opportunity to demonstrate our Region’s dedication to protecting our children from measles and our commitment to eliminating measles by 2015.”

A variety of activities will be carried out by countries in the Region, including workshops, seminars, media campaigns, celebrations and social mobilization. In addition, countries will expand vaccination services, such as tracking unvaccinated people, extending operational hours, and implementing large-scale vaccination campaigns and Child Health Days to deliver an integrated package of life-saving health interventions.

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