More than 210 000 children under the age of 5 across Syria catch up on their vaccines

Damascus, 29 June 2020 – With an aim to maintain vital routine immunization services amid the COVID-19 pandemic, a national immunization campaign supported by WHO and UNICEF has concluded across Syria. During the 5-day campaign, implemented by the Syrian Ministry of Health, health workers checked the vaccination status of more than 900 000 children and vaccinated more than 210 100 children to ensure they are caught up with the routine immunization schedule.

Over 1000 health centres, 545 mobile teams, 666 temporary vaccination posts and more than 8000 health workers were mobilized for the campaign. In-line with WHO global guidelines, health workers were trained on preventative and precautionary measures, including disinfection, hygiene protocols and overcrowding prevention. In addition, they were provided with personal protection equipment for their safety and that of children and caregivers during the immunization campaign.

“No child should miss out on their vaccinations, now more than ever” says Fran Equiza, UNICEF Representative in Syria, “These are difficult times, parents may feel overwhelmed with worries. Our message to them is clear: make sure your kids receive their routine immunizations to avoid vaccine-preventable diseases. When vaccination coverage goes down, more outbreaks will occur, including of life-threatening diseases like measles and polio.”

According to WHO, there has been about a 5% reduction in vaccination coverage in the first half of 2020. This has occurred mainly as a result of challenges inflicted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including limited access to health centres due to movement restrictions, as well as fear of contracting the virus. WHO continuously asserts its commitment to provide support to save the lives of children and protect them against poor health outcomes, including the threat of vaccine-preventable diseases.

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