

PROGRESS FOR CHILDREN – Key Messages

- Each year, a quarter of the children born are not protected through immunization and an estimated 1.4 million children under five years of age still die from vaccine preventable diseases.
- Immunization already prevents more than two million child deaths each year and as new vaccines against rotavirus and pneumococcus, deadly forms of diarrhea and pneumonia, become available over the next few years an additional 1.1 million child deaths could be prevented.
- The report assesses countries progress in protecting children under the age of one through routine measles immunization, a key strategy to achieving Millennium Development Goal 4 - reducing under-five mortality by two-thirds by 2015 from 1990 baseline figures.
- The report reveals that some 103 countries are already protecting 90 per cent of their children against vaccine-preventable diseases and another 16 are making steady progress. However in 74 countries, programmes have not kept up or progress is too slow to achieve MDG 4.
- While the majority of countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, Middle East and North Africa as well as in the industrialized world is on track, most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia will need greatly increased efforts.
- On average, the Latin America and the Caribbean region registers the most progress, surpassing even industrialized countries. Sub-Saharan Africa, the region with the lowest immunization coverage will need to rapidly improve their rates of progress. However, broad-brush averages can be misleading as several countries such as the United Republic of Tanzania, Rwanda and the Gambia are already immunizing over 90 per cent of their children under one year of age.
- No region yet delivers equitable immunization coverage in all its countries. Out of a total of 193 countries only 35, most in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, extend immunization equally across all wealth quintiles and ethnic groups.
- Immunization is often the only basic healthcare service that many children will receive in their first year of life, and is all the more important as it opens the gateway for a child's integration into the healthcare system and gives access to other life-saving interventions.
- Though routine immunization rates are insufficient in many countries, much progress has been made in reducing deaths from some vaccine-preventable diseases. Mass measles campaigns which are not captured by the data in this report have been very successful in reducing global measles deaths by almost half over the last five years.
- To sustainably reduce child deaths through immunization:
 - i. More children must be protected against more diseases;
 - ii. New vaccines and technologies must continue to be introduced;
 - iii. Other critical life-saving interventions such as mosquito nets must be provided along with immunization and each year;
 - iv. An equitable and secure supply of resources for immunization must be made available to protect the ever-expanding numbers of pregnant woman and children born each year.