

## **PROGRESS FOR CHILDREN – UNICEF’s Role in Global Immunization**

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**UNICEF is the world’s leading supplier of vaccines to developing countries as part of its commitment to child survival.** UNICEF supplies vaccines to over 40 percent of the world’s children and devotes almost a quarter of its annual budget to vaccine supply and immunization programmes. In 2004, UNICEF provided more than 2.8 billion doses of vaccine to children in more than 100 countries. Since 1988, UNICEF has supplied more than 12 billion doses of Oral Polio Vaccine to support the Global Polio Eradication Initiative.

UNICEF works with countries, partners and donor governments to obtain more accurate forecasting of vaccine demands, which helps to secure and protect vaccine availability in the global marketplace.

**UNICEF plays a central role in the formation of partnerships and alliances to harness support for immunization.** UNICEF is a key partner in several global public-private immunization partnerships, namely the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, the Measles Partnership, the Initiative to Eliminate Maternal and Neonatal Tetanus and the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI), which focuses on delivering new and underused vaccines to the poorest countries.

UNICEF, as a partner in GAVI, has facilitated the introduction of new vaccines, particularly Hepatitis B, in 66 countries over the past four years.

At the country level, UNICEF works with partners to gain and maintain support for immunization from governments and local leaders. And where public trust has a direct bearing on immunization coverage rates, UNICEF is a leader in the critical effort to engage religious and traditional leaders in support of immunization and child survival campaigns.

**In over 100 developing countries, UNICEF works with governments to ensure that children can access efficient, safe and sustainable immunization services.** UNICEF strengthens the capacity of national and local health systems by training health workers, providing technical assistance to government departments, both national and district, and helping governments to maintain the “cold-chain” – the critical refrigeration network that keeps vaccines safe and effective.

UNICEF also educates families about the importance of preventative health care like immunization and develops special outreach strategies to bring these services to remote and under-served communities.

**Preventing and controlling communicable diseases in an emergency is one of UNICEF’s core commitments.** When emergencies strike, UNICEF moves quickly to provide measles immunization (a first priority for children, often administered with immune-boosting vitamin A supplements).

In 2003, UNICEF supported emergency vaccination of more than 50 million children living in countries facing complex humanitarian crises, including Angola, Afghanistan, Cote d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Sudan and Uganda. More than 60,000 lives were saved from these efforts. UNICEF also assists countries in conflict to bring vaccines to children by brokering ‘Days of Tranquillity’, when all parties to conflict cease hostilities in order to allow children access to immunization and other health care services.

**Immunization provides an opportunity to bring other lifesaving interventions to children.** During vaccination campaigns, routine immunization or child health days, UNICEF and other partners have assisted countries in the distribution of insecticide-treated mosquito nets, vitamin A supplements, de-worming tablets and oral rehydration salts.