

Media Update

13 November 2020

United Nations

SECRETARY-GENERAL MESSAGE

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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MESSAGE FOR WORLD DIABETES DAY

14 November 2020

Many efforts have been made to prevent and treat diabetes. Yet the number of people with diabetes is going up. What's more, it is rising most rapidly in low- and middle-income countries, the countries least well-equipped with the diagnostics, medicines, and knowledge to provide life-saving treatment.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought additional pain. Many people who require regular care and treatment for their diabetes have struggled to access that care. And people with diabetes are at increased risk of severe disease and death from COVID-19.

Next year, the World Health Organization will launch the Global Diabetes Compact, a new initiative that will bring structure and coherence to our complementary efforts to reduce the burden of diabetes.

Let us work together to make sure that, through this ambitious and much-needed collaboration, we will soon be talking about the decline in diabetes as a public health problem. And as we strive to overcome the pandemic, let us do our utmost to ensure Universal Health Coverage, strengthen health systems and advance good health and resilience for all.

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MESSAGE ON WORLD DAY OF REMEMBRANCE FOR ROAD TRAFFIC VICTIMS New York, 15 November 2020

Road traffic collisions are a major health and development concern. Some 3700 fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, friends and colleagues are lost on the world's roads every day. Road traffic incidents are the leading cause of death for children and young adults between 5 and 29 years old, and ninety percent of victims live in low- and middle-income countries.

We need to remember this as we resolve to build a strong recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Our mobility systems must have safety at their core. This is the only way we will achieve the ambitious goal of halving road deaths and injuries by 2030.

The United Nations road safety conventions are key to helping countries address the main causes of accidents. I welcome the recent General Assembly Resolution that proclaimed a second Decade of Action for Road Safety from 2021 to 2030, and urged support for the efforts of my Special Envoy for Road Safety and for the United Nations Road Safety Fund.

As we remember the victims of road traffic collisions, let's commit to reimagining ways to move around the world that are safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable for all, everywhere.

UNESCO

PRESS RELEASE

Norway Expands its Support to UNESCO for Girls' Transition from Primary to Lower Secondary Education Programme in Pakistan

Islamabad, 11 November 2020 The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has extended its support to UNESCO Pakistan with the approved funding of 13.5 million Norwegian Kroner (NOK) for the improvement of the "Girls' Lower Secondary Education Programme (GLSEP)". Currently, Norway supports the GLSEP programming in the districts of Swat and Kohistan in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province of Pakistan. Considering the low transition of girls' from primary to secondary level due to multiple reasons, the Norwegian support has significant importance to facilitate girls' post-primary education in Pakistan.

To strengthen the existing GLSEP portfolio, the Norwegian Government has agreed to the proposal of programme expansion in three additional districts of Pakistan. H.E. Kjell-Gunnar Eriksen, Norwegian Ambassador to Pakistan and Ms. Patricia McPhillips, UNESCO's Representative/Director signed the agreement for additional funding of NOK 11 million to extend the scope of GLSEP in Mohamand, a newly merged tribal district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Muzaffargarh in Punjab and Tharparkar in Sindh provinces respectively. With the additional funding, 112 additional girls' lower secondary schools including 20 schools from Mohmand district, 30 from Muzaffargarh, and 62 (12 for girls and 50 mixed schools) from Tharparkar will come under the purview of the Norwegian programme. With 46 girls' schools in Kohistan and Swat, the total coverage of schools under the Norwegian programme will now be 158 girls/mixed lower secondary schools in 05 target districts. In addition to Kohistan and Swat districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, the GLSEP in the three newly added districts will supplement its support in the transition of girls from primary to lower secondary education, through local and institutional interventions targeting multiple stakeholders including education officials, school management committees, community leaders, teachers and parents.

Ms. Patricia McPhillips commended the additional contribution of the Norwegian government and shared, "Huge number of girls are dropping out after the completion of primary education in Pakistan, particularly in the remotes areas, which is a serious issue." She opined, "The Norwegian support is a significant step forward for promotion of girls' lower secondary education

in the most isolated districts of Pakistan.” UNESCO is already operational in the target districts and made substantive progress for access and quality of girls’ primary education. Norwegian support has been playing a vital role for UNESCO to work for the promotion of girls’ lower secondary education in the same geographical territories.

H.E. Kjell-Gunnar Eriksen appreciated UNESCO’s consistent support and stated, “The promotion of girls’ education is a priority for Norwegian programme support in Pakistan. The GLSEP is one of the biggest programmes of Norway in Pakistan, which is a testimony to our shared aspirations of winning the common goal of promoting girls’ education in the marginalised areas of the country.” He further added, “I am delighted to add on the existing funding, which will ensure consistency of our efforts for supporting the transition of girls to lower secondary education.”

Norway’s constant and long-standing programme support has made remarkable contributions to increasing both access and quality of education, with a special focus on girls. The Norwegian Government’s persistent commitment to invest in the education sector, with a holistic approach, to improve girls’ access and transition to quality lower secondary education, will further the prospects of girls’ education in Pakistan.

UNICEF

PRESS RELEASE

Worldwide Measles Deaths Climb 50% from 2016 to 2019 Claiming Over 207,500 Lives in 2019

NEW YORK/ GENEVA/ ATLANTA, 13 November 2020 – Measles surged worldwide in 2019 reaching highest number of reported cases in 23 years. Highlighted in a publication by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), measles cases worldwide increased to 869,770 in 2019, the highest number reported since 1996 with increases in all WHO regions. Global measles deaths climbed nearly 50 percent since 2016, claiming an estimated 207,500 lives in 2019 alone.

After steady global progress from 2010 to 2016, the number of reported measles cases climbed progressively to 2019. Comparing 2019 data with the historic low in reported measles cases in 2016, authors cite a failure to vaccinate children on time with two doses of measles-containing vaccines (MCV1 and MCV2) as the main driver of these increases in cases and deaths.

“We know how to prevent measles outbreaks and deaths,” said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. “These data send a clear message that we are failing to protect children from measles in every region of the world. We must collectively work to support countries and engage communities to reach everyone, everywhere with measles vaccine and stop this deadly virus.”

Measles outbreaks occur when people who are not protected from the virus are infected and spread the disease to unvaccinated or under-vaccinated populations. To control measles and prevent outbreaks and deaths, vaccination coverage rates with the required MCV1 and MCV2 must reach 95 percent and be maintained at national and subnational levels. MCV1 coverage has been stagnant globally for more than a decade at between 84 and 85 percent. MCV2 coverage has been steadily increasing but is only now at 71 percent. Vaccination coverage against measles remains well below the 95 percent or higher needed with both doses to control measles and prevent outbreaks and deaths.

Global response to COVID-19 pandemic must not exacerbate the measles crisis

Although reported cases of measles are lower in 2020, necessary efforts to control COVID-19 have resulted in disruptions in vaccination and crippled efforts to prevent and minimize measles outbreaks. As of November, more than 94 million people were at risk of missing vaccines due to paused measles campaigns in 26 countries. Many of these countries are experiencing ongoing outbreaks. Of countries with postponed planned 2020 campaigns, only eight (Brazil, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Nepal, Nigeria, Philippines and Somalia) resumed their campaigns after initial delays.

“Before there was a coronavirus crisis, the world was grappling with a measles crisis, and it has not gone away,” said Henrietta Fore, UNICEF Executive Director. “While health systems are strained by the COVID-19 pandemic, we must not allow our fight against one deadly disease to come at the expense of

our fight against another. This means ensuring we have the resources to continue immunization campaigns for all vaccine-preventable diseases, even as we address the growing COVID-19 pandemic.”

Causes of failure to control measles are many and must be addressed

Global immunization partners are engaging leaders and public health professionals in affected and at-risk countries to ensure that measles vaccines are available and safely delivered, and that caregivers understand the life-saving benefit of the vaccine. On 6 November 2020, WHO and UNICEF issued an [emergency call to action for measles and polio outbreak prevention and response](#).

“Measles virus easily finds unprotected children, adolescents and adults because it is so contagious,” said Dr. Robert Linkins, Measles & Rubella Initiative Management Team Chair and Accelerated Disease Control Branch Chief at U.S. CDC. “Infections are not only a sign of poor measles vaccination coverage, but also a known marker, or ‘tracer,’ that vital health services may not be reaching populations most at-risk. Our collective efforts to reach children with vaccines now, ahead of the possible easing of COVID-19 travel restrictions and increased population movement, will save lives.”

The [Measles & Rubella Initiative](#) (M&RI), which includes American Red Cross, the United Nations Foundation, the U.S. CDC, UNICEF and WHO, and global immunization partners like Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and others, are working to address the current measles crisis and ensure that resources are positioned to address immunization delays – for measles and all vaccines – in every region of the world. A bold strategy released by M&RI, [Measles & Rubella Strategic Framework 2021 – 2030](#), will help to address reversals in global progress toward measles elimination by bolstering strong, national immunization systems that can reach and protect children. This strategic shift by the partnership will focus on strengthening the routine delivery of all vaccines, and quickly and effectively detecting and responding to measles outbreaks.

Quotes from Our Partners

“These alarming figures should act as a warning that, with the COVID-19 pandemic occupying health systems across the world, we cannot afford to take our eye off the ball when it comes to other deadly diseases. Measles is entirely preventable; in a time in which we have a powerful, safe and cost-effective vaccine nobody should still be dying of this disease. COVID-19 has resulted in dangerous declines in immunization coverage, leading to increased risk of

measles outbreaks. This is why countries urgently need to prioritize measles catch-up immunization through routine services to mitigate the risk of outbreaks and ensure no child goes without this lifesaving vaccine.” - Dr Seth Berkley, CEO of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.

“The fact that measles outbreaks are occurring at the highest levels we’ve seen in a generation is unthinkable when we have a safe, cost-effective, and proven vaccine. No child should die from a vaccine-preventable disease. We are proud to chart a bold way forward with partners to close gaps in access to immunization and rapidly respond to outbreaks so everyone, everywhere can live healthy lives.” - Elizabeth Cousens, President & CEO, United Nations Foundation.

“We are concerned that COVID-19 will contribute to an increase in the number of measles cases and deaths. Measles knows no borders, and it is imperative we work together to vaccinate more children and continue the fight against this preventable disease. “Around the globe, Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers help families in chronically unvaccinated communities to protect their children. Join us in this effort.” - Gail McGovern, President & CEO of the American Red Cross.

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Notes to editors

Download photos and broil on vaccines here:

<https://weshare.unicef.org/Package/2AM408X1UA6X>

About M&RI:

The [Measles & Rubella Initiative](#) (M&RI) is a partnership between the American Red Cross, the United Nations Foundation, the U.S. CDC, UNICEF and WHO. Working with Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance and other stakeholders, the Initiative is committed to achieving and maintaining a world without measles, rubella and congenital rubella syndrome. Since 2000, M&RI has helped deliver over 5.5 billion doses of measles vaccine to children worldwide and saved over 25.5 million lives by increasing vaccination coverage, responding to outbreaks, monitoring and evaluation, and supporting demand for vaccine.

More information on measles:

WHO [factsheet](#); CDC [measles](#) updates; Latest WHO measles [surveillance data](#); UNICEF’s [immunization](#) updates; and [Latest WHO guidelines for immunization programme in context of COVID-19](#)

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