

Media Update

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UNICEF

PRESS RELEASE

World Immunization Week: UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador Liam Neeson headlines week-long commemoration of global vaccination efforts and calls for greater investment

Global partners pledge \$1 for every like, share, or comment on social media posts mentioning 'UNICEF' using the hashtag #longlifeforall until May 10

NEW YORK, 25 April 2022 – UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador Liam Neeson is leading UNICEF's global immunization initiative with a global message thanking the scientists, parents, health workers and others who have been so critical in helping to immunize children over the last two decades.

In a video released ahead of [World Immunization Week](#), Neeson talks about how the efforts of scientists such as Jonas Salk, who developed the first vaccine against polio, and dedicated workers who fill vials at factories or deliver vaccine injections, have made it possible to save two to three million child lives each year.

“Vaccines are a remarkable human success story. Over last the 75 years, billions of children have been vaccinated, thanks to scientists, to health workers, to volunteers. If you've ever been vaccinated, or vaccinated your children, then you are part of the arm-to-arm chain that keeps all humanity safe,” said Liam Neeson, UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador. “We live our lives free of worry about catching smallpox. Once a terrifying diagnosis, polio is no longer a threat in most of the world. The conversation about vaccines in recent years has lost sight of how much good they have done for each of us. We need

to celebrate this. It is perhaps one of the biggest collective achievements in human history.”

Every like, share, or comment on posts mentioning a UNICEF social media account and using the hashtag #longlifeforall from now until May 10 will unlock US \$1 to UNICEF, from the United Nations Foundation’s [Shot@Life campaign](#) and the [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#) – up to a total of US\$10 million – to help ensure all children get the life-saving vaccines they need.

Despite the successes, an alarming 23 million children missed out on vaccinations in 2020. This number can only be reduced through greater commitment to and investment in immunization services. UNICEF is the world’s leading provider of vaccines to children in over 100 countries. With Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance and partners UNICEF supplies vaccines to reach 45 per cent of the world’s children under five. UNICEF also works with Governments in over 130 countries to strengthen national health and immunization programmes.

“The last two years have taught us that a health care system that leaves some children exposed, is a health care system that leaves all children exposed,” said UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell. “The best way for the world to recover from this pandemic – and to prepare for future health emergencies -- is to invest in stronger health systems, and immunization and essential health services for every child.”

World Immunization Week – celebrated every year in the last week of April – is spearheaded by the World Health Organization and brings together global partners to promote the use of vaccines to protect people of all ages against disease. The theme for this year is #LongLifeForAll, with ‘long life’ reflecting the importance of lifespan vaccinations.

“We are in a race against time to restore the immunization services disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic and accelerate progress against all vaccine-preventable diseases,” said Gargee Ghosh, President of Global Policy and Advocacy at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. “That is why we are thrilled to work with UNICEF and other partners around the world to ensure children – especially those in the world’s poorest countries – have access to the vaccines they need to live a long, healthy life.”

“UNICEF ensures that nearly half of the world’s children under five are ‘protected by love’ with lifesaving vaccines,” said Martha Rebour, Executive Director of Shot@Life, United Nations Foundation. “We are honored to support

and promote their work during World Immunization Week and hope that others will join us in our advocacy for these critical global vaccine programs.”

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Notes to editors

The video and campaign will go live at 00.01 GMT 24 August. Online conversations with UNICEF Ambassadors will be shared on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) and also available to [download here](#) under embargo and throughout World Immunization Week.

Find out more about UNICEF’s work on immunization [here](#).

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About UNICEF

UNICEF works in some of the world’s toughest places, to reach the world’s most disadvantaged children. Across more than 190 countries and territories, we work for every child, everywhere, to build a better world for everyone.

For more information about UNICEF and its work for children visit www.unicef.org

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About Shot@Life

Shot@Life is a grassroots advocacy campaign of the United Nations Foundation that champions global childhood immunization as one of the most effective ways to save the lives of children around the world. We rally members of the public, members of Congress, businesses, and civil society partners —

through public education and grassroots advocacy — to support and invest in global childhood immunization programs. Learn more at www.ShotAtLife.org