

MEASLES INITIATIVE



The Measles Initiative is a partnership committed to reducing measles deaths globally. Launched in 2001, the Initiative—led by the American Red Cross, the United Nations Foundation, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, UNICEF and the World Health Organization—provides technical and financial support to governments and communities on vaccination campaigns and disease surveillance worldwide. The Initiative has supported the vaccination of more than 600 million children in more than 60 countries helping reduce measles deaths by 74% globally and 89% in Africa (compared to 2000). To learn more or make a donation, visit www.measlesinitiative.org.

ABOUT MEASLES:

- Measles remains a leading cause of death among young children, especially in developing countries. In 2007, an estimated 197,000 children— 540 each day— died from measles.
- Measles is one of the most contagious diseases known and causes severe health complications, such as pneumonia, blindness, diarrhea and encephalitis.
- Millions of children are at risk from measles. Malnourished and un-immunized children under five years of age are most vulnerable to dying from this disease.
- It costs less than US \$1 to vaccinate a child against measles. This is one of the most cost-effective health interventions available.

PROGRESS TO DATE:

- From 2000 to 2007, measles deaths fell by 74% globally, from an estimated 750,000 to 197,000. During this period, the largest reductions occurred in Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean where deaths dropped by 89% and 90% respectively.
- The Measles Initiative has supported vaccination campaigns in more than 60 countries, mostly in Africa and Asia. Since 2001, over 600 million children received measles vaccines through these campaigns.
- Measles vaccination campaigns usually include additional health services. Between 2001 and 2007, the Measles Initiative and its partners supported the distribution of more than 31 million insecticide-treated bed nets for malaria prevention, 49 million doses of de-worming medicine, and 126 million doses of vitamin A.
- From 2000 to 2007 routine measles vaccination coverage increased from 72% to 82% worldwide, meaning that many more children are benefiting from health services.

WHAT'S NEXT:

- The partnership is now focused on the United Nations' goal of reducing measles deaths by 90% worldwide between 2000 and 2010.
- To achieve this goal, the Initiative is supporting the full implementation of measles mortality reduction activities in India, where the measles burden remains high. The Initiative is also continuing efforts in Africa and other regions to sustain and improve on the current progress.
- Despite the significant drop in measles deaths since 2000, there is more work to be done to ensure that children are protected. In 2007, more than 23 million one-year old children did not receive a dose of measles vaccine through routine immunization services.