

## Summary of Immunization Week 2011

1. Immunization week, a WHO-led initiative focuses on saving lives by protecting more people against vaccine-preventable diseases through immunization. The aim of the initiative is to:
  - raise awareness on the importance of immunization;
  - expand the culture of disease prevention and control through vaccination;
  - vaccinate vulnerable populations, for example those living in border areas and urban fringes; and
  - ensure continuing political commitment for immunization.
2. This year, the initiative will bring together about 180 countries and territories across the five WHO regions of Africa, Americas, Eastern Mediterranean, Europe and the Western Pacific.

Vaccination Week in the Americas began in 2003; European Immunization Week in 2005; Vaccination Week in the Eastern Mediterranean in 2010; and African Vaccination Week and Vaccination Week in the Western Pacific are launching this year. The South-East Asia region is currently reviewing the possibility of participating in next year's event. This progress makes the goal of a world immunization week seem well within reach.

3. Starting 23 April, various launch events are planned to take place and countries will implement a wide range of activities to boost community awareness on the benefits and importance of immunization. These activities are chosen by each participating country according to their current national health priorities and include:
  - dissemination of information on the importance of immunization;
  - training sessions and workshops for health workers;
  - exhibitions;
  - social mobilization;
  - press conferences;
  - round table discussions with political decision makers, medical professionals, parents and caregivers;
  - tracking of unvaccinated people to ensure that their vaccination status are up-to-date; and
  - large-scale vaccination campaigns to protect vulnerable populations against diseases such as diphtheria, hepatitis B, influenza, measles, mumps, maternal and neonatal tetanus, polio, rubella, whooping cough and yellow fever.
4. WHO provides technical and financial support to countries in preparing and implementing relevant immunization activities by developing planning materials, reviewing country action plans, monitoring and evaluating impact of activities and advocacy tools such as banners, posters, brochures, videos and podcasts.
5. Regional and national partners such as other UN organizations, associations of health professionals, non-governmental organizations and civil societies assist in rolling out the various activities. In addition, presidents and prime ministers, first ladies, health ministers, ambassadors and leading personalities also lend their support to this important initiative.

6. Immunization is one of the most successful and effective health interventions. Immunization has reduced morbidity and mortality across the world in a safe and cost-effective manner. It is an important investment for all countries. From infants to senior citizens, immunization prevents debilitating illness, disability and death from vaccine-preventable diseases. The benefits of immunization are increasingly being extended to adolescents and adults, providing protection against life-threatening diseases such as influenza, meningitis, and cancers that occur in adulthood.

## **Regional summary**

### **African Vaccination Week (AVW)**

- 25 April - 1 May.
- Theme: Put mothers and children first; vaccinate and stop polio now
- Slogan: Vaccinated communities, Healthy communities
- Participation from 37 (out of 46) countries in the region.
- The regional launch will take place on 28 April in Kinshasa, DRC. It will coincide with 2nd round of polio campaigns in all West and Central Africa countries.
- Most of the East & Southern Africa countries will combine AVW with Child Health Week activities in April and May 2011.

### **Vaccination Week in the Americas (VWA)**

- 23-30 April
- Theme: Vaccinate your family, protect your community
- Participation from 40 (out of 44) countries and territories in the region. Countries and territories are targeting to vaccinate more than 41 million during the week.
- Several launch events will be held during the week, for example at border areas between Bolivia and Peru in Kasani; along the US and Mexico border; in the Amazon in Manaus, Brazil; tri-national border area between Colombia, Brazil and Peru; and between Guatemala and Honduras.

### **Vaccination Week in the Eastern Mediterranean (VWEM)**

- 24-30 April
- Theme: Partnership for immunization.
- Participation from 19 (out of 21) countries in the region.
- A regional launch event will be held on 21 April at the WHO Regional Office in Cairo, Egypt. A video, with narration from the Regional Director, will be shown at the launching ceremony. A roundtable discussion will follow.

### **European Immunization Week (EIW)**

- 23-30 April 2011
- Theme: Shared solutions to common threats -- focusing on the need for sub-regional collaboration to prevent and control vaccine-preventable outbreaks.
- Participation from more than 50 countries and territories in the region.
- A regional launch event will take place in Brussels on 26 April, hosted by HRH Crown Princess Mathilde of Belgium. Live webcast of the launch event will be available on the EIW campaign web site <http://eiw.euro.who.int>
- Following the launch, a round-table will be held to discuss measles outbreaks, with the above participants and representatives from several Member States.
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> "flagship" event will take place 28-29 April in Tirana, Albania. This sub-regional meeting will focus on "shared solutions to common threats" and

immunization among migrant and vulnerable populations in South East Europe (SEE) with participation from 10 SEE countries.

- Polio supplementary immunization activities are taking place in 6 states in Central Asia during EIW.

#### **Vaccination Week in the Western Pacific (VWWP)**

- 25-30 April. The regional launch will be on 25 April at the Regional Office in Manila.
- Participation from 31 countries and areas (out of 37)

#### **Related links**

Immunization week: a major force for child survival

[http://www.who.int/features/2011/immunization\\_week/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/features/2011/immunization_week/en/index.html)

African Vaccination Week

<http://www.afro.who.int/en/media-centre/pressreleases/2750-first-african-vaccination-week-to-be-observed-in-april-2011.html>

Vaccination Week in the Americas

[http://new.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=4614&Itemid=3594](http://new.paho.org/hq/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=4614&Itemid=3594)

Vaccination Week in the Eastern Mediterranean

<http://www.emro.who.int/vpi/vwem2011/index.htm>

European Immunization Week

<http://www.euro.who.int/en/what-we-do/health-topics/disease-prevention/vaccines-and-immunization/european-immunization-week/european-immunization-week-2011>

Vaccination Week in the Western Pacific

[http://www.wpro.who.int/sites/epi/vaccination/vaccination\\_week.htm](http://www.wpro.who.int/sites/epi/vaccination/vaccination_week.htm)

Global immunization data

[http://www.who.int/immunization\\_monitoring/Global\\_Immunization\\_Data.pdf](http://www.who.int/immunization_monitoring/Global_Immunization_Data.pdf)