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E. PLAN OF ACTION ON IMMUNIZATION: PROGRESS REPORT

Background

1. The purpose of this document is to present the second progress report on the implementation of Resolution CD54.R8 (2015), Plan of Action on Immunization, toward achievement of the Plan's objectives, and to emphasize the challenges that will have to be overcome in the next two years in order to meet the targets established for 2020 (1, 2). In the preparation of this report, the following sources were consulted: *a)* reports by the countries' ministries of health; *b)* the PAHO/WHO/UNICEF joint reporting form on immunization (JRF) with official data to December 2018 (3); and *c)* a compilation of research and other available resources. This report was examined by the PAHO Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on Vaccine-preventable Diseases (VPDs) in July 2019 (4) and will be shared with the Member States for their knowledge and action.

Analysis of Progress Achieved

2. The immunization program in the Region of the Americas is meeting five of the six objectives set by the World Health Organization in the Global Vaccine Action Plan (GVAP) (5, 6). The Region has led the way in the elimination of vaccine-preventable diseases. In 2017 Haiti achieved elimination of neonatal tetanus and consequently the Region was declared free of this disease (7). The Region is also on the way to eliminating mother-to-child transmission of hepatitis B and continues to lead the world in the sustainable introduction of vaccines, such as the inactivated polio vaccine and the vaccines against pneumococcus, rotavirus, human papilloma virus (HPV), and seasonal influenza, among others. Thanks to this progress, national immunization programs are helping to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. However, despite the demonstrated achievements and leadership, the Region is facing various challenges, ranging from the sociopolitical situation in some countries to natural disasters and mass migration, which have put great demands on national health systems, with increased demand for the provision of health services, including vaccination, which is often not satisfied (8).

Furthermore, epidemiological surveillance systems have been affected when detecting, confirming, and controlling outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases.

3. Circulation of the measles virus in the rest of the world, with the consequent risk of importation to the Region, and low vaccination coverage at the local and district levels, are the leading causes of outbreaks of this disease (9). In 2018, 15 countries in the Region reported vaccination coverage above 95% for the first dose of the measles and rubella vaccine, and eight countries for the second dose (3).

4. Regional coverage of the third dose of the vaccine against diphtheria, whooping cough, and tetanus (DPT3) has remained at 88% for the past two years. This means that approximately 1.5 million children under 1 year of age have not received timely vaccination against these diseases. Despite improvement in the indicator of the number of countries reporting at least 80% coverage of DPT3 in all municipalities (13 in 2016 versus 22 in 2018), there is still room for improvement. Furthermore, five countries have a dropout rate above 10% between the first and third dose of DPT (3).

5. Despite a lack of regional-level immunization data disaggregated by sex, age, and ethnicity, monitoring of the Regional Plan of Action on Immunization (RIAP) has confirmed that nine countries of the Region have fully implemented electronic immunization registries (4). Using these registries, countries can individually monitor and consider the variables of sex, age, and ethnicity. At the same time, some countries with consolidated data are working diligently to gather disaggregated data based on demographic factors.

6. Because the Region of the Americas is known to be one of the most inequitable in the world (10), one of the RIAP indicators measures coverage using variables that make it possible to monitor inequities. In the Region, this analysis has already been done for three countries and two more are in preparation. A step-by-step manual has also been developed to generalize this measurement.

7. Another of the significant advances achieved through the RIAP has been the creation of the Caribbean Immunization Technical Advisory Group, which will provide evidence-based technical advice on immunization to health ministers through the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Council for Human and Social Development.

8. A lesson learned from the RIAP is that monitoring the implementation of this plan has strengthened the monitoring and use of immunization data. Countries have adopted the PAHO/WHO/UNICEF joint reporting form on immunization as the official source of information on the plan of action and have made strides in terms of timely presentation and data integrity. Furthermore, the plan of action emphasizes the commitment of the countries and territories of the Region to meet the targets and indicators established in the RIAP.

Achievement of the indicators of the plan of action

9. The RIAP has 13 objectives and 29 indicators; in 2018, 22 of those indicators showed progress and seven were behind, three fewer than in the midterm review presented in 2017.

<i>Strategic line of action 1: Sustain the achievements</i>	
General Objective 1.1: Maintain the Region's status as polio-free	
Indicator, baseline, and target	Status
1.1.1 Number of countries and territories reporting cases of paralysis due to wild poliovirus or the circulation of vaccine-derived poliovirus (cVDPV) in the last year Baseline (2013): 0 Target (2020): 0	As of 2018, none of the 52 countries and territories of the Region had reported cases of paralysis due to wild poliovirus or cVDPV.
General Objective 1.2: Maintain elimination of measles, rubella, and CRS	
Indicator, baseline, and target	Status
1.2.1 Number of countries and territories in which endemic transmission of measles or rubella virus has been reestablished Baseline (2013): 1 Target (2020): 0	In July 2018, endemic transmission of measles was reestablished in Venezuela. Endemic transmission was reestablished in Brazil in February 2019. This indicator has not progressed.
General Objective 1.3: Maintain achievements reached in vaccine-preventable disease control	
Indicator, baseline, and target	Status
1.3.1 Number of countries and territories that meet the indicators for monitoring the quality of epidemiological surveillance of acute flaccid paralysis (AFP) cases Baseline (2013): 2 Target: (2020): 13	As of 2018, seven of the 52 countries and territories of the Region had met the indicators for monitoring the quality of epidemiological surveillance of AFP cases. This indicator has progressed with respect to the midterm report, but countries still need to focus on achieving the notification rate for suspected cases.
1.3.2 Number of countries and territories that meet the indicators for monitoring the quality of epidemiological surveillance of suspect measles, rubella and congenital rubella syndrome cases Baseline (2013): 9 Target: (2020): 18	As of 2018, 13 of the 52 countries and territories of the Region had met the indicators for monitoring the quality of epidemiological surveillance of suspected cases of measles, rubella, and congenital rubella syndrome. Given the epidemiological situation in the Region, countries need to strengthen the measles and rubella surveillance system in order to respond promptly to imports and stop active outbreaks.

Strategic line of action 1: Sustain the achievements	
General Objective 1.3: Maintain achievements reached in vaccine-preventable disease control	
Indicator, baseline, and target	Status
<p>1.3.3 Number of countries and territories that administer hepatitis B vaccine to newborns during the first 24 hours</p> <p>Baseline (2013): 18 Target: (2020): 25</p>	<p>As of 2018, 26 countries and territories had adopted the policy on universal vaccination at birth.</p>
Strategic Objective 1.1: All countries make a commitment to vaccination as a priority for health and development	
Indicator, baseline, and target	Status
<p>1.1.1 Number of countries and territories that have a legislative or regulatory basis for their immunization program</p> <p>Baseline (2013): 28 Target: (2020): 32</p>	<p>As of 2018, no additional country or territory had passed laws or regulations on their vaccination program. However, countries are reviewing and updating their legislative framework for the vaccination program.</p> <p>This indicator has not progressed.</p>
<p>1.1.2 Number of countries and territories having an immunization technical advisory committee that meets the WHO's criteria for good operation</p> <p>Baseline (2013): 15 Target: (2020): 18</p>	<p>As of 2018, 38 countries and territories of the Region had reported having the support of a technical advisory committee on immunization in accordance with WHO criteria.</p>
<p>1.1.3 Number of countries and territories that have a current annual immunization plan of action that includes operational and financial plans</p> <p>Baseline (2013): 25 Target: (2020): 35</p>	<p>As of 2018, 39 countries and territories of the Region had an up-to-date plan for annual immunization.</p>
Strategic Objective 1.2: Individuals and communities understand the value of vaccines	
Indicator, baseline, and target	Status
<p>1.2.1 Number of countries and territories that report having monitored public satisfaction with vaccination during the Vaccination Week in the Americas or other activities</p> <p>Baseline (2013): 0 Target: (2020): 15</p>	<p>In 2018, 10 countries and territories of the Region reported that they had used Vaccination Week in the Americas as a platform to monitor public awareness, acceptance, and satisfaction.</p>

Strategic line of action 2: Complete the unfinished agenda in order to prevent and control vaccine-preventable diseases	
General Objective 2.1: Eliminate neonatal tetanus as a public health problem in all countries	
Indicator, baseline, and target	Status
<p>2.1.1 Number of countries and territories with municipalities reporting rates of neonatal tetanus above 1/1,000 live births</p> <p>Baseline (2013): 1 Target (2020): 0</p>	<p>As of 2018, no country or territory of the Region had reported municipalities reporting NTT rates above 1/1,000 live births.</p>
General Objective 2.2: Meet DPT vaccination coverage targets at all levels	
Indicator, baseline, and target	Status
<p>2.2.1 Number of countries and territories reporting national average coverage of at least 95% with three doses of DPT vaccine in children under 1 year</p> <p>Baseline (2013): 19 Target: (2020): 35</p>	<p>As of 2018, 16 countries and territories of the Region had reached at least 95% coverage with DPT3.</p> <p>This indicator has not progressed.</p>
<p>2.2.2 Number of countries and territories reporting coverage of at least 80% in each district or equivalent with three doses of DPT vaccine in children under 1 year</p> <p>Baseline (2013): 12 Target: (2020): 35</p>	<p>As of 2018, 22 countries and territories of the Region had reported at least 80% coverage with DPT3 in every district.</p> <p>Although this indicator has not progressed as planned, countries have begun the measurement process in order to ensure that no child is left without a vaccination schedule.</p>
Strategic Objective 2.1: Immunization benefits extend equitably to all people and social groups	
Indicator, baseline, and target	Status
<p>2.1.1 Number of countries and territories reporting coverage by income quintile or other subgroups that make it possible to monitor vaccination equity</p> <p>Baseline (2013): 0 Target: (2020): 15</p>	<p>As of 2018, three countries were reporting coverage using an indicator to monitor equity, and another two countries were working on this. Work is also being done to systematically monitor equity.</p> <p>This indicator has progressed with respect to the midterm report, but countries still need to make efforts to collect information to perform these analyses.</p>

Strategic line of action 3: Tackle new challenges in the introduction of vaccines and assess their impact	
General Objective 3.1: Introduce vaccines in accordance with technical and programmatic criteria	
Indicator, baseline, and target	Status
<p>3.1.1 Number of countries and territories that have introduced one or more new vaccines into their national vaccination schedules</p> <p>Baseline (2013): 32 Target (2020): 40</p>	<p>As of 2018, 46 countries and territories of the Region had introduced new vaccines (against rotavirus, pneumococcus, and HPV) in their national vaccination schedules.</p>
Strategic Objective 3.1: Decision-making is evidence-based and impact assessments ensure that policies are adopted to maximize the benefits of vaccination	
Indicator, baseline, and target	Status
<p>3.1.1 Number of countries and territories that have conducted studies prior to the introduction of a vaccine (e.g., cost-effectiveness analysis)</p> <p>Baseline (2013): 14 Target (2020): 20</p>	<p>As of 2018, 16 countries and territories of the Region had conducted studies prior to the introduction of a vaccine.</p>
<p>3.1.2 Number of countries and territories that have conducted studies after the introduction of a vaccine (e.g., impact assessments, operational review, etc.)</p> <p>Baseline (2013): 9 Target (2020): 15</p>	<p>As of 2018, 18 countries and territories of the Region had conducted studies after the introduction of a vaccine.</p>
Strategic line of action 4: Strengthen health services for effective vaccine administration	
General Objective 4.1: Achieve the expected results proposed by the Post-2015 Development Agenda for reductions in infant mortality and maternal mortality	
Indicator, baseline, and target	Status
<p>4.1.1 Number of countries and territories whose immunization schedules include vaccination of pregnant women against influenza and/or with tetanus-diphtheria vaccine, as tracers of maternal vaccination</p> <p>Baseline (2013): 27 Target (2020): 35</p>	<p>As of 2018, influenza vaccination was prescribed for pregnant women in 34 countries of the Region.</p>

<i>Strategic line of action 4: Strengthen health services for effective vaccine administration</i>	
General Objective 4.1: Achieve the expected results proposed by the Post-2015 Development Agenda for reductions in infant mortality and maternal mortality	
Indicator, baseline, and target	Status
<p>4.1.2 Number of countries and territories that offer other preventive interventions integrated with vaccination</p> <p>Baseline (2013): 4 Target (2020): 20</p>	<p>As of 2018, 34 countries and territories of the Region offered preventive interventions integrated with vaccination, such as anthelmintic drugs, iron, folic acid, and vitamin A.</p>
Strategic Objective 4.1 Supplies are available for the immunization program on a sustainable basis with national resources	
Indicator, baseline, and target	Status
<p>4.1.1 Number of countries and territories that finance more than 90% of their immunization programs with national resources</p> <p>Baseline (2013): 27 Target (2020): 35</p>	<p>As of 2018, 34 countries and territories of the Region were able to finance their programs with national resources.</p>
<p>4.1.2 Percentage of birth cohort in Latin America and the Caribbean that has access to an adequate supply of quality vaccines</p> <p>Baseline (2013): 100 Target (2020): 100</p>	<p>As of 2018, 100% of the cohort had access to an adequate supply of quality vaccines.</p>
<p>4.1.3 Number of countries and territories that procure vaccines through the Revolving Fund and that meet the criteria for accuracy of demand for vaccines and supply</p> <p>Baseline (2013): 10 Target (2020): 30</p>	<p>As of 2018, 14 of 41 participating countries met the criteria for accuracy of demand for vaccines and supplies.</p> <p>Although this indicator has not progressed, the Revolving Fund for Vaccine Procurement works closely with countries to improve the accuracy of demand planning and to address budgetary, financial, and operational challenges in the supply chain.</p>

<i>Strategic line of action 4: Strengthen health services for effective vaccine administration</i>	
Strategic Objective 4.2: Strengthened immunization services are part of comprehensive, well-run health services	
Indicator, baseline, and target	Status
<p>4.2.1 Number of countries and territories that have dropout rates below 5% between the first and the third dose of DPT vaccine</p> <p>Baseline (2013): 11 Target (2020): 35</p>	<p>In 2018, 28 countries and territories of the Region had dropout rates below 5% between the first and third dose of DPT vaccine.</p>
<p>4.2.2 Number of countries and territories with coverage above 95% for third dose of DPT vaccine sustained for three or more consecutive years</p> <p>Baseline (2013): 13 Target (2020): 35</p>	<p>As of 2018, six countries and territories of the Region had maintained coverage above 95% for the third dose of DPT for three or more consecutive years.</p> <p>This indicator has not progressed.</p>
<p>4.2.3 Number of countries and territories that have conducted exercises to identify and correct barriers to reaching the unvaccinated or under-vaccinated populations</p> <p>Baseline (2013): 22 Target (2020): 35</p>	<p>As of 2018, 27 countries and territories of the Region had conducted activities to detect and overcome obstacles to reaching unvaccinated or under-vaccinated populations.</p>
<p>4.2.4 Number of countries and territories that have held activities to improve the quality of their coverage data and that include these activities in their annual action plans</p> <p>Baseline (2013): 12 Target (2020): 25</p>	<p>As of 2018, 41 countries and territories of the Region had held activities to improve the quality of their vaccination data.</p>
<p>4.2.5 Number of countries and territories that have a national system for computerized nominal immunization registry</p> <p>Baseline (2013): 3 Target (2020): 10</p>	<p>As of 2018, 19 countries and territories of the Region were implementing a nominal electronic immunization registry.</p>
<p>4.2.6 Number of countries and territories that report having had a stock-out of a vaccine or related supplies for one full month or more at any level (local, subnational, or national)</p> <p>Baseline (2013): 11 Target (2020): 0</p>	<p>As of 2018, 23 countries and territories of the Region had reported stock-outs of these vaccines: PCV, rotavirus, BCG, DPT, measles, polio, and hepatitis B.</p> <p>This indicator has not progressed.</p>

Strategic line of action 4: Strengthen health services for effective vaccine administration	
Strategic Objective 4.2: Strengthened immunization services are part of comprehensive, well-run health services	
Indicator, baseline, and target	Status
<p>4.2.7 Number of countries and territories that have strengthened post-marketing surveillance of vaccines in the Expanded Program on Immunization</p> <p>Baseline (2013): 4 Target (2020): 10</p>	<p>As of 2018, 42 countries and territories of the Region had strengthened post-marketing monitoring of vaccines in the Expanded Program on Immunization, with a national system to monitor post-vaccination adverse events.</p>
<p>4.2.8 Number of countries and territories that hold vaccination activities geared to health workers</p> <p>Baseline (2013): 19 Target (2020): 25</p>	<p>As of 2017, 37 countries and territories of the Region had held vaccination activities geared to health workers.</p>

Action Needed to Improve the Situation

10. The Region is committed to achieving effective and equitable universal coverage. To accomplish this, the countries and territories of the Region need to strengthen their national immunization programs and integrate them into the health system. They should also emphasize the following:

- a) *Governance.* Maintain and strengthen political commitment to the immunization program; ensure available resources for the components of the program as part of the process of integrating universal health; protect the program's financial and operational sustainability; and ensure that legal frameworks are updated.
- b) *Health services.* Guarantee access to vaccination for everyone and adapt to local conditions, sociodemographic changes, and the presence of specific population (ethnic groups, migrants, populations affected by natural disasters, etc.). Take advantage of integrated approaches within the health system (service delivery, supply chain, cold chain, surveillance, etc.) and other care primary interventions (deworming, vitamin A, etc.) with emphasis on microplanning, supervision, evaluation, and accountability.
- c) *Equity.* Ensure that everyone has equitable access to vaccines, regardless of geographical location, gender, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, or any other factor that could hinder their access to services, in order to achieve at least 95% coverage homogeneously across all districts of the country, with emphasis on the most vulnerable populations.

- d) *Epidemiological surveillance of vaccine-preventable diseases*. Improve the quality and timeliness of reporting to provide rapid response; and strengthen case studies and laboratory capacity.
- e) *Information systems*. Systematically monitor inequalities to inform decisions on how coverage can be improved with emphasis on vulnerable population groups, areas with migratory movements or social conflicts, unplanned urbanization, and ethnic groups. Using management tools (microplanning, conditional subsidies, etc.), implement strategies for everyone to have access to vaccination. Strengthen the quality and use of data to allow analysis and decision-making at all levels.
- f) *Communication and social mobilization*. Evaluate the organizational, cultural, and operational obstacles to vaccination. On this basis, adopt integrated communication strategies focused on each population group in order to strengthen messages about the trustworthiness, safety, and efficacy of vaccines.

Action by the Directing Council

- 11. The Directing Council is invited to take note of this progress report and offer any comments it deems pertinent.

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