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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 (1, 2), 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 (3). 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; and *c*) a compilation of research and other available resources (4). This report will be examined by the PAHO Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on Vaccine-preventable Diseases (5, 6) and will be shared with the Member States for their knowledge and action (2, 4, 5). It is important to mention that this document presents official data for 2017 from the countries and territories of the Region of the Americas. PAHO is currently receiving joint reporting forms with data for 2018.

Update on the progress achieved

2. The immunization program in the Region of the Americas has led the way in the elimination of vaccine-preventable diseases (7-9). In 2017, when Haiti received certification for the elimination of neonatal tetanus (4), the Region was declared free of this disease, and it is on the way to eliminating mother-to-child transmission of hepatitis B. The Region continues to lead the world in the sustainable introduction of vaccines, such as those against pneumococcus, rotavirus, HPV, and seasonal influenza, among others. Thanks to this progress, national immunization programs are helping to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (10, 11). However, despite these achievements and leadership, the Region is currently facing outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases such as measles, diphtheria, whooping cough, and yellow fever, which are important public health problems. Circulation of the measles virus in the rest of the world, the permanent risk of importation to the Region of the Americas, and low vaccination coverage at the local and district levels are the leading causes of measles outbreaks. In 2017, 10% of the countries of the Region reported a vaccination coverage rate below 80% for the first dose of the measles and rubella vaccine (4). Regional coverage of the third dose of the vaccine

against diphtheria, whooping cough, and tetanus has declined to 88%. This means that approximately 1.8 million children under 1 year of age have not been vaccinated against these diseases.

3. A lesson learned from the Regional Plan of Action on Immunization (RIAP) (12) is that monitoring the implementation of the 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 RIAP and have improved its timeliness and coverage. 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.

4. Despite a lack of regional-level immunization data disaggregated by sex, age, and ethnicity, monitoring of the RIAP has confirmed that electronic immunization registries are used in 14 countries of the Region. 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.

5. With regard to progress with the four strategic lines, the objectives, and the indicators of the plan of action for the 2017-2018 biennium, since the joint reporting form is officially presented at the end of April, there was limited available data when this report was prepared in the first quarter of 2019. These forms are the official source of information from countries and data will be updated as they are received. The plan of action has 13 objectives and 29 indicators; as of 2017, 20 of those indicators had progressed as expected and nine were off track.

<i>Strategic line of action 1: Sustain the achievements</i>		
General Objectives (GO) and Strategic Objectives (SO)	Indicator	Status
GO 1.1 Maintain the Region's status as polio-free	GO 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 2017, none of the 52 countries and territories of the Region had reported cases of paralysis due to wild poliovirus or cVDPV.

<i>Strategic line of action 1: Sustain the achievements</i>		
General Objectives (GO) and Strategic Objectives (SO)	Indicator	Status
GO 1.2 Maintain elimination of measles, rubella, and CRS	GO 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. This indicator has not progressed.
GO 1.3 Maintain achievements reached in vaccine-preventable disease control	GO 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 2017, 2 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 not progressed.
	GO 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 2017, 18 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.
	GO 1.3.3 Number of countries and territories that administer hepatitis B vaccine to newborns during the first 24 hours Baseline (2013): 18 Target: (2020): 25	As of 2017, 24 countries and territories had adopted the policy on universal vaccination at birth.
SO 1.1 All countries make a commitment to vaccination as a priority for health and development	SO 1.1.1 Number of countries and territories that have a legislative or regulatory basis for their immunization program Baseline (2013): 28 Target: (2020): 32	As of 2017, 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. This indicator has not progressed.

<i>Strategic line of action 1: Sustain the achievements</i>		
General Objectives (GO) and Strategic Objectives (SO)	Indicator	Status
	<p>SO 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>	As of 2017, 16 countries and territories of the Region had reported having the support of a technical advisory committee on immunization in accordance with WHO criteria.
	<p>SO 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>	As of 2017, 41 countries and territories of the Region had an up-to-date plan for annual immunization.
<p>SO 1.2 Individuals and communities understand the value of vaccines</p>	<p>SO 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>	In 2017, 4 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.

<i>Strategic line of action 2: Complete the unfinished agenda in order to prevent and control vaccine-preventable diseases</i>		
General Objectives (GO) and Strategic Objectives (SO)	Indicator	Status
<p>GO 2.1 Eliminate neonatal tetanus as a public health problem in all countries</p>	<p>GO 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>	As of 2017, no country or territory of the Region had reported municipalities reporting NTT rates above 1/1,000 live births.
<p>GO 2.2 Meet DPT vaccination coverage targets at all levels</p>	<p>GO 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>	As of 2017, 11 countries and territories of the Region had reached at least 95% coverage with DPT3. This indicator has not progressed.

Strategic line of action 2: Complete the unfinished agenda in order to prevent and control vaccine-preventable diseases

General Objectives (GO) and Strategic Objectives (SO)	Indicator	Status
	<p>GO 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 2017, 13 countries and territories of the Region had reported at least 80% coverage with DPT3 in every district.</p> <p>This indicator has not progressed sufficiently.</p>
<p>SO 2.1 Immunization benefits extend equitably to all people and social groups</p>	<p>SO 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 2017, no country or territory of the Region had reported coverage by income. However, work has been done to learn the methodology for calculating inequities in immunization.</p> <p>This indicator has not progressed.</p>

Strategic line of action 3: Tackle new challenges in the introduction of vaccines and assess their impact

General Objectives (GO) and Strategic Objectives (SO)	Indicator	Status
<p>GO 3.1 Introduce vaccines in accordance with technical and programmatic criteria</p>	<p>GO 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 2017, 43 countries and territories of the Region had introduced new vaccines (against rotavirus, pneumococcus, and HPV) in their national vaccination schedules.</p>

<i>Strategic line of action 3: Tackle new challenges in the introduction of vaccines and assess their impact</i>		
General Objectives (GO) and Strategic Objectives (SO)	Indicator	Status
SO 3.1 Decision-making is evidence-based and impact assessments ensure that policies are adopted to maximize the benefits of vaccination	SO 3.1.1 Number of countries and territories that have conducted studies prior to the introduction of a vaccine (e.g., cost-effectiveness analysis) Baseline (2013): 14 Target (2020): 20	As of 2017, 16 countries and territories of the Region had conducted studies prior to the introduction of a vaccine.
	SO 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.) Baseline (2013): 9 Target (2020): 15	As of 2017, 13 countries and territories of the Region had conducted studies after the introduction of a vaccine.

<i>Strategic line of action 4: Strengthen health services for effective vaccine administration</i>		
General Objectives (GO) and Strategic Objectives (SO)	Indicator	Status
GO 4.1 Achieve the expected results proposed by the Post-2015 Development Agenda for reductions in infant mortality and maternal mortality	GO 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 Baseline (2013): 27 Target (2020): 35	As of 2017, influenza vaccination was prescribed for pregnant women in 33 countries of the Region.
	GO 4.1.2 Number of countries and territories that offer other preventive interventions integrated with vaccination Baseline (2013): 4 Target (2020): 20	As of 2017, 9 countries and territories of the Region offered preventive interventions integrated with vaccination, such as anthelmintic drugs, iron, folic acid, and vitamin A.

<i>Strategic line of action 4: Strengthen health services for effective vaccine administration</i>		
General Objectives (GO) and Strategic Objectives (SO)	Indicator	Status
SO 4.1 Supplies are available for the immunization program on a sustainable basis with national resources	SO 4.1.1 Number of countries and territories that finance more than 90% of their immunization programs with national resources Baseline (2013): 27 Target (2020): 35	As of 2017, 33 countries and territories of the Region were able to finance their programs with national resources.
	SO 4.1.2 Percentage of birth cohort in Latin America and the Caribbean that has access to an adequate supply of quality vaccines Baseline (2013): 100 Target (2020): 100	As of 2017, 100% of the cohort had access to an adequate supply of quality vaccines.
	SO 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 Baseline (2013): 10 Target (2020): 30	As of 2017, 23 of 41 participating countries and territories of the Region had met the targets for accuracy of demand for at least half of their vaccine procurement.
SO 4.2 Strengthened immunization services are part of comprehensive, well-run health services	SO 4.2.1 Number of countries and territories that have dropout rates below 5% between the first and the third dose of DPT vaccine Baseline (2013): 11 Target (2020): 35	In 2017, 21 countries and territories of the Region had dropout rates below 5% between the first and third dose of DPT vaccine.
	SO 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 Baseline (2013): 13 Target (2020): 35	As of 2017, 5 countries and territories of the Region had maintained coverage above 95% for the third dose of DPT for three or more consecutive years. This indicator has not progressed.

<i>Strategic line of action 4: Strengthen health services for effective vaccine administration</i>		
General Objectives (GO) and Strategic Objectives (SO)	Indicator	Status
	<p>SO 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 2017, 23 countries and territories of the Region had conducted activities to detect and overcome obstacles to reaching unvaccinated or under-vaccinated populations.</p> <p>This indicator has not progressed sufficiently.</p>
	<p>SO 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 2017, 24 countries and territories of the Region had held activities to improve the quality of their vaccination data.</p>
	<p>SO 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 2017, 14 countries and territories of the Region had implemented a nominal electronic immunization registry.</p>
	<p>SO 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 2017, 17 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>

<i>Strategic line of action 4: Strengthen health services for effective vaccine administration</i>		
General Objectives (GO) and Strategic Objectives (SO)	Indicator	Status
	<p>SO 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>	As of 2017, 40 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>SO 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>	As of 2017, 35 countries and territories of the Region had held vaccination activities geared to health workers.

Measures needed to improve the situation

6. 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; and protect the program's financial and operational sustainability.
- b) *Vaccination 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) *Epidemiological surveillance of vaccine-preventable diseases.* Improve the quality and timeliness of reporting to provide rapid response; and strengthen case studies and laboratory capacity in order to guarantee timely response on the part of health services.

- d) *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.
- e) *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 Executive Committee

- 7. The Executive Committee is invited to take note of this progress report and provide the recommendations it deems pertinent.

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