

**REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE  
EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN  
Sixty-fifth Session  
Khartoum, Sudan, 15–18 October 2018**

**October 2018**

**SIDE EVENT**

**UPDATE ON THE SUPPORT OF GAVI, THE VACCINE ALLIANCE**

**Objectives of the event**

The objectives of the event are to:

- share and discuss country approaches to strengthening political will and country leadership and ensuring appropriate planning in order to achieve immunization coverage targets, equity and sustainable access to vaccines in line with the *Eastern Mediterranean Vaccine Action Plan* and Gavi's strategic goals for universal health coverage by 2030;
- highlight regional achievements, key challenges, and the way forward for strengthening partnerships for immunization.

**Background**

Six countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Region – Afghanistan, Djibouti, Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen – receive support from Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. The Syrian Arab Republic has been approved for Gavi vaccine support but from January 2019 is likely to become eligible for full support. As a unique public-private partnership, Gavi comprises an alliance of multiple stakeholders, ranging from national governments, partner agencies, academia, educational institutions and the private sector, who work extensively to improve childhood immunization coverage in low-income countries and to accelerate access to new vaccines. Gavi support to countries of the Region has amounted to approximately US\$ 2.076 billion over the last 17 years.

Gavi support has been instrumental in strengthening health systems and immunization in the Region and improving equity in access to immunization services and new and underutilized life-saving vaccines. Sudan benefited from support extended to measles and rubella control efforts in implementation of supplementary immunization activities and the introduction of vaccines for rubella, yellow fever and meningitis A.

**Challenges in the Region**

While some progress has been witnessed in all six countries, including countries with weak health systems and those affected by emergencies, the targets agreed by Member States and outlined in the *Eastern Mediterranean Vaccine Action Plan* have not been met. The average penta 3 coverage for 2017, according to WHO/UNICEF estimates, for the six countries was 73%, compared to 88.9% for the remaining 16 countries of the Region. In addition, 74.6% of the 3.7 million infants who did not receive their third dose of DTP vaccine in the Region in 2017 were in Gavi-supported countries. In the Syrian Arab Republic, DPT3 coverage according to WHO/UNICEF estimates for 2017 was 48% from 42% in 2016, as compared to 80% in 2010.

Procedural issues at partner agencies and in ministries of health have also contributed to delays in some countries receiving Gavi support for health system and immunization strengthening.

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## **Expected outcomes**

- Increased recognition of the need for high-level officials to attend this side meeting to promote immunization programmes and monitor progress in their respective countries in line with the targets of the *Eastern Mediterranean Vaccine Action Plan* and the *Global Vaccine Action Plan*.
- Participants are updated on recent Gavi policies and available support.
- Increased awareness of cross-cutting issues for groups of countries to strengthen partnerships for improved utilization of Gavi support for favourable immunization outcomes.