



# Gavi CSO Constituency

Helping Reach Every Child

## **A Collaborative Push for Sustainable Immunisation Financing in Africa**

The Regional Dialogue on Immunisation Financing, held on July 31, 2024, convened key stakeholders to address the urgent challenge of securing sustainable funding for routine Immunisation programs in Africa. Titled "A Deep Dive into Financing for Routine Immunisation in Africa," the event, co-organized by the Gavi CSO Constituency, PATH, and WACI Health, brought together experts, advocates, and government officials from across the continent. Participants collaborated to develop strategies that would overcome financial and logistical barriers, ensuring life-saving vaccines reach every child.

Vandana Shah, Senior Policy Advisor at the Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHA), set the tone for the discussions by underscoring the importance of sustained advocacy in influencing government budget allocations for Immunisation. "In several countries, we've seen a positive shift in government spending on health, but Immunisation needs to be a clearer priority," Shah emphasized. Her insights revealed that while some countries, like Kenya, have increased their overall health budgets by up to 12%, the proportion allocated to Immunisation often remains alarmingly low—less than 3% in many cases.

Shah also highlighted the pivotal role of civil society organizations (CSOs) in driving transparency and accountability. "CSOs are crucial in ensuring that Immunisation funding is prioritized and that governments follow through on their commitments," she explained, sharing how GHA's ten-country project has successfully enhanced Immunisation financing through targeted advocacy.

The session featured deep dives into country-specific experiences, with Dr. Mike Mulongo, Health Financing Advisor at PATH, presenting a detailed analysis of the disparities in Immunisation financing across Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Ethiopia. Mulongo

provided a stark overview of Nigeria, where only 2% of the health budget is dedicated to Immunisation—a troubling statistic given the country's large population and significant vaccine needs. "Such low allocations are insufficient to ensure widespread vaccine coverage, particularly in a country as populous as Nigeria," Mulongo warned.

Turning to the DRC, Mulongo described how political instability has further strained Immunisation efforts, with less than 1% of the national budget earmarked for these critical programs. "The challenges here are immense, but they underscore the importance of resilient health systems that can operate effectively even in unstable environments," he noted.

However, Mulongo pointed to Ethiopia as a beacon of hope, where strategic partnerships and focused advocacy have led to gradual improvements in Immunisation funding. "Ethiopia's model, which blends international aid with increasing domestic investment, could serve as an example for other countries facing similar challenges," he suggested.

Dr. Aminu Magashi Garba, Senior Program Officer at WACI Health, added another dimension to the discussion by focusing on the importance of accountability in government spending on Immunisation. "We must ensure that every dollar allocated to Immunisation is used effectively," Magashi stressed. She highlighted Uganda as a case study where relentless advocacy led to a 15% increase in Immunisation funding over the past five years, demonstrating the power of consistent, targeted efforts.

The conversation also touched on the unique challenges faced by the DRC, as detailed by Dr. Mymy Mwika from the country's Ministry of Health. She explained that routine Immunisation is frequently disrupted in conflict-affected areas, leading to outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases. "In these regions, innovative funding mechanisms and robust international partnerships are crucial to maintaining Immunisation programs," Dr. Mwika urged.

The session's discussions led to several key findings, which have been distilled into actionable recommendations:

1. **Increase Immunisation Budget Allocations:** Across the continent, Immunisation often receives less than 3% of national health budgets, as seen in Kenya and Nigeria. There is a

pressing need for governments to allocate more resources to meet the growing demand for vaccines.

2. **Build Resilient Health Systems:** Countries like the DRC, where political instability disrupts routine Immunisation, need to focus on building resilient health systems that can withstand such challenges.
3. **Enhance Accountability and Transparency:** Governments should collaborate more closely with CSOs to ensure transparency in the use of Immunisation funds, helping to track expenditures and ensure that allocated funds are effectively utilized.
4. **Develop Sustainable Financing Models:** Reducing dependency on donor funding by developing sustainable domestic financing models is crucial. Ethiopia and Uganda's strategies offer valuable lessons in this regard.
5. **Leverage Public-Private Partnerships:** Governments should explore public-private partnerships to bridge the Immunisation financing gap and improve vaccine coverage.

Keightley Reynolds, Policy and Advocacy Manager at Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, delivered a passionate call to action, urging all stakeholders to prioritize Immunisation financing across Africa. "Securing sustainable financing for Immunisation is not just a government responsibility; it requires the collective effort of governments, civil society, and international partners," Reynolds asserted. She stressed the need for African countries to develop financing models that reduce dependence on donor funding while strengthening domestic resource mobilization. "Our shared future in Immunisation depends on our collective commitment to action and innovation," Reynolds concluded, highlighting the crucial role of collaboration in achieving lasting success.

The Regional Dialogue underscored the urgent need for a collaborative approach to secure sustainable financing for routine Immunisation in Africa. Increased domestic investment, enhanced transparency and accountability, and strategic advocacy are essential to ensuring that every child receives the vaccines they need. As Africa continues to confront significant public health challenges, the success of its Immunisation programs will depend on the unwavering commitment and cooperation of governments, civil society, and international partners.

