



New Global Commitment to Primary Healthcare for All at WHO Global Conference in Kazakhstan

(Source: WHO Press Release)

Countries around the world have vowed to strengthen their primary healthcare systems as an essential step toward achieving universal health coverage in its *Declaration of Astana*. This reaffirmation of the historic 1978 *Declaration of Alma-Ata* took place at the Global Conference on Primary Healthcare in Astana, Kazakhstan on October 25-26, 2018. The event was co-hosted by The World Health Organization, UNICEF and the Government of Kazakhstan, and included participants from government healthy ministries, as well as the world of finance, education, social welfare, healthcare workers, patient advocates, youth delegates and activists, leaders representing bilateral and multilateral institutions, academia, philanthropy and the private sector.

The Declaration was unanimously endorsed by all WHO member states and pledged in four key areas: (1) make bold political choices for health across all sectors; (2) build sustainable primary healthcare; (3) empower individual and communities; and, (4) align stakeholder support to national policies, strategies and plans.

"Today, instead of health for all, we have health for some," said Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the WHO. "We all have a solemn responsibility to ensure that today's declaration on primary health care enables every person, everywhere to exercise their fundamental right to health."

While the original 1978 Declaration of Alma-Ata laid a foundation for primary healthcare, progress over the past four decades has been uneven at best. At least half of the world's population lacks access to essential health services, including care for non-communicable and communicable diseases, maternal and child health, mental health, and sexual and reproductive health.

"Although the world is a healthier place for children today more than ever before, close to six million children die every year before their fifth birthday mostly from preventable causes, and more than 150 million are stunted," said Henrietta Fore, UNICEF executive director. "We, as a global community, can change that by bringing quality health services close to those who need them. That's what primary health care is about."

The Declaration of Astana comes amid a growing global movement for greater investment in primary health care to achieve universal health coverage. Health resources have been overwhelmingly focused on single disease interventions as opposed to strong comprehensive health systems – a gap highlighted by several health emergencies in recent years.

UNICEF and WHO will assist governments and civil society to act on the Declaration of Astana and encourage them to back the movement. UNICEF and WHO will also support countries in reviewing the implementation of the Declaration, in cooperation with other partners from around the globe.

Around the Globe...

- ♦ The government of Haiti launched the introduction of the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) into its national routine immunization program. The vaccine will potentially reach as many as 270,000 Haitian children each year who will now be eligible to receive it. Pneumococcal disease is a serious illness caused by an infection linked to meningitis and pneumonia. Pneumonia is the leading killer of children under the age of five worldwide. Support for the vaccine is being provided by **GAVI the Vaccine Alliance**, which has committed US\$4.3 million to Haiti, and has called on Haitian leaders to increase spending on immunization and health. GAVI has also supported other vaccines in Haiti, including rotavirus and cholera.

- ♦ Researchers are investigating the idea of creating a "Noah's Ark" of beneficial human microbes to safeguard human health in the future. Included in the collection would be trillions of microscopic organisms that live in and on our bodies, and benefit our health many ways, according to the authors of the proposal. Antibiotics, processed-food diets and other modern threats have led to a huge loss of microbial diversity leading to a rise in health problems. "We're facing a growing global health crisis, which requires that we capture and preserve the diversity of the human microbiota while it still exists," said lead study author *Maria Gloria Dominguez-Bello* of Rutgers University. Scientists would harvest the microbes from remote populations still unaffected by modern ills, according to researchers. Currently, the gut flora of most Americans is half as diverse as that of the hunter-gatherers in isolated villages located in the Amazon. These microbes are essential to aid digestion, strengthen the immune system, and protect against invading germs.

- ♦ Rubella (also known as German measles) has been eliminated in Australia, sending the message that vaccinations indeed work. The disease, known to cause miscarriage pregnant women, as well as birth defects or stillbirth no longer exists in the nation. "The science is in and the medical experts' advice is absolute – vaccinations save lives and protect lives and they are an essential part of a healthy society," said Australian health minister *Greg Hunt*. The national immunization program currently provides free rubella vaccinations for children age 12 months, with a booster at 18 months.

- ♦ In response to rising cases of malaria in the region, countries across southern Africa are stepping up commitments to eradicate malaria by 2030. Sixteen heads of state signed the "*Windhoek Declaration on Eliminating Malaria in the SADC Region*" at the 38th Ordinary Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), putting forth key endorsements of actions aimed at putting the region back on track to achieving their global malaria elimination targets.

- ♦ The **Bayer Foundation** launched a new program "*Grants4Impact*" aimed at targeting support for social impact pioneers

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Innovation at GAVI: “The status quo will not suffice”

(Source: Catherine Cheney for Devex)

Almost a year ago, GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance and leaders from Silicon Valley convened at a lunch in San Francisco bay area to discuss how to best scale up private sector innovations to meet global health priorities specifically around vaccine deliveries, while simultaneously benefitting the companies making the deliveries.

“If we are to succeed we will need your help” wrote Seth Berkley, CEO of GAVI, in the email invitation. “As technology leaders, investors and entrepreneurs, we believe that the solutions to many of these challenges are in many ways aligned with your own goals and are therefore asking for your input.” His words pointed directly to one of GAVI’s key elements in its innovation strategy: engaging with technology companies in the Bay Area and beyond in improve vaccine delivery around the globe.

GAVI’s senior manager of strategic innovation and partnership, Moz Siddiqui, spoke about the strategy in an interview with Devex, and explained how innovation can accelerate progress in vaccinating the populations that are the most challenging to reach, particularly children. One of GAVI’s major goals is to vaccinate 300 million more children by 2020.

“Up to now, we have immunized 700 million children, and by 2020 we want to reach another 300 million children, so the Alliance will have immunized about a billion children,” he said. “How are we going to get to the last 20 percent? We know the solutions we have aren’t quite there. And we know that we need to work differently. The status quo will not suffice.”

GAVI’s request for partnership stands out in a sea of inquiries that inundate Silicon Valley, according to Siddiqui. He referred to GAVI as a “scaling platform” since it purchases vaccines for approximately 60 percent of the world’s children, and works with countries to build system aimed at delivering those vaccines.

“Gavi is the neutral partner representing the collective interests of all those vested within the vaccine ecosystem and aligning the incentives,” Siddiqui said, who is part of GAVI’s Resource Mobilisation and Private Sector Partnerships team.

GAVI is currently reviewing existing innovations and contemplating how to apply those technologies to the GAVI model. To further increase new ideas, GAVI launched INFUSE, an accelerator aimed to support “innovation for uptake, scale and equity in immunization.” That has resulted in partnerships with key organizations that are comprised of the best and the brightest in the field. GAVI’s biggest question is adaptability. According to Siddiqui, “We’re not saying whatever works for Company X is going to work in country Y. But it’s looking at those approaches and figuring out how that works in the context and problems we are trying to solve for. Our engagement is around: How do we look at those solutions and adapt them to a GAVI context?”

The drone startup Zipline (a recent presenter at IFPW’s 2018 General Membership Meeting) also partnered with GAVI via the INFUSE program. GAVI helped bring Zipline, the United Parcel Service and the Rwandan government together to develop the first national drone delivery system. While the Rwanda drone program has primarily focused on deliveries carrying blood supplies, GAVI worked with Zipline

to explore ways to deliver vaccines in a more cost-effective manner while getting them to their destination in a quicker and safer way than by motorcycle.

“Government ownership is the biggest driving factor for scale,” Siddiqui said. “You have to look at whether the government has really bought into this, and how can a mechanism like GAVI drive that forward.”

Currently GAVI faces challenges in operationalizing its innovation strategy. “Internally, it is ensuring that an organization as diverse as GAVI, which includes the Alliance partners, agree on the definition and use of innovation,” Siddiqui said.

IFPW is a proud strategic partner of GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance, assisting with training programs aimed at improving the drug supply chain across Africa.



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Around the Globe (cont.)...

and startups in the fields of healthcare and nutrition. The program will give selected change-makers around the globe new opportunities to grow and transform great ideas into power impact solutions that help improve the lives of millions. In periods of two years, five carefully-selected candidates will receive grants totally €1 million (US\$1.14 million) to scale their ideas to the next level. Each project will receive cash contributions as well as additional in-kind benefits (e.g., training, mentoring, coaching and PR or visibility boosts.)

- ◆ For the sixth consecutive year, **Abbott** has been named global industry leader in sustainability on the **Dow Jones Sustainability Index (DJSI)**. The designation recognizes companies for responsible and sustainable business, including economic, social and environmental performance. This is the 14th consecutive year that Abbott has been recognized for its sustainability efforts, including both the DJSI and the North America Index. The company earned the highest scores in economic and social performance with a score of 82, more than double the average corporate score of 33.

- ◆ In 2017, **GlaxoSmithKline** surpassed **Merck** to top the vaccine industry in sales, generating US\$7 billion (compared to Merck’s US\$6.5 billion.) Analysts predict that the switch will be long-term as GSK’s momentum will continue to build. The company doubled down on efforts in 2014 with its massive Novartis swap, and looks ahead to nearly US\$11 billion in vaccine sales by 2024.

(Sources: AllAfrica.com, Company Press Releases, FiercePharma, SBS News, and WEBMD)