

PRESS STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: March 13th, 2025

Subject: Urgent Call to Secure Immunization Financing for Sustained Immunization Gains in Kenya

Nairobi, Kenya-Health Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are raising an urgent call to the Kenyan government to prioritize GAVI Co-financing obligations for this financial year if we are to retain the immunization gains. Kenya has had a good relationship with Gavi, the vaccine alliance, over the years, where Kenya co-finances immunization with GAVI on agreed terms and timelines. This is essential for ensuring the nation's long-term health and achieving full immunization coverage for every Kenyan child. As we strive to eliminate vaccine-preventable diseases, only a coordinated and financed effort can secure a healthier future for all Kenyans.

Kenya's health leadership and commitment to immunization deserve recognition. The country has achieved more than 80% vaccination coverage, a commendable milestone that has helped reduce zero-dose children and increase overall immunization rates. The timely payment of previous co-financing obligations has played a pivotal role in sustaining these achievements. However, a significant challenge looms despite this progress, threatening to undermine these gains.

A Financial Gap That Cannot Be Ignored

The pending Gavi co-financing obligations for FY 2024/2025 amount to a staggering **USD \$12,485,880**, which translates to approximately **Ksh. 1.25 billion** for **6,461,595** doses of different vaccines, with a deadline for payment being June 30th, 2025. Failure to meet this obligation risks interrupting the vaccine supply in Kenya, which could lead to stockouts and leave millions of children unprotected. As key voices in public health, we urge the government to act swiftly to avoid any disruptions to immunization programs.

Why This Matters

Immunization is a cornerstone of Kenya's primary healthcare system and a powerful tool in reducing under-five mortality. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), vaccines prevent millions of deaths annually, and Kenya's success stories speak volumes. Most Kenyans are beneficiaries of these vaccines. Immunization has been a game-changer in public health, from eradicating smallpox to significantly reducing polio and measles cases.

In 2021, immunization was critical in lowering under-five mortality rates from 120 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 52 per 1,000 live births, saving countless young lives. Yet, as Gavi's funding decreases, Kenya faces the reality of increased dependence on external partners to sustain vaccine supply, putting the country's immunization success at risk.

The Call for Action

Kenya must adopt a sustainable immunization financing model as the financing landscape changes. Domestic financing is critical to reduce reliance on external aid and safeguard vaccine access for future generations.

Therefore, Health CSOs in Kenya call on the Ministry of Health and the National Treasury to urgently prioritize the following actions:

- i. **Develop a Co-Financing Payment Plan:** Establish a clear, feasible payment plan for the 2024/2025 co-financing obligation to ensure timely payment and prevent disruptions in vaccine delivery that might lead to vaccine shortages.
- ii. **Fast-Track the Donor Transition Plan:** As Gavi and other donors prepare to transition out, we urge the Ministry of Health to accelerate plans to secure sustainable domestic funding for immunization beyond 2028.
- iii. **Foster Collaboration:** We encourage greater collaboration between government agencies, healthcare providers, community organizations, and international partners to mobilize resources and improve the delivery of immunization services across the country.
- iv. **Increase Government Commitment:** We call for substantially increasing national budget allocations for immunization programs. According to UNICEF, Kenya must increase its immunization financing by at least 30% over the next five years to maintain and expand coverage.

The Time to Act is Now

Immunization is not just a public health issue—it's a national priority. With continued investment, Kenya can build a future free from vaccine-preventable diseases and ensure a healthier, more prosperous nation for future generations. We must not let financial gaps threaten the incredible progress we've made.

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