

PARLIAMENTARY BREAKFAST MEETING ON THE ISTANBUL CALL FOR ACTION ON IMMUNIZATION FINANCING

DATE: 23RD OCTOBER 2025

VENUE: SAROVA PANAFRIC HOTEL, NAIROBI

Introduction

The Health NGOs Network (HENNET) convened a high-level Parliamentary Breakfast Meeting bringing together Members of Parliament from the Health and Budget Committees, Ministry of Health officials, civil society, private sector partners, and development stakeholders. The forum aimed to strengthen political leadership and sustainable domestic financing for immunization as Kenya prepares to transition from Gavi support. It provided a platform for parliamentarians and stakeholders to translate global and national commitments into sustained investments that guarantee equitable vaccine access and long-term health security for all citizens. The discussions centered on the Istanbul Call for Action, with a focus on Kenya's progress, financing gaps, and the need for enhanced accountability and coordination between national and county governments.

Opening and Welcome Remarks

Dr. Margaret Lubaale - *Executive Director, HENNET*

Dr. Margaret Lubaale welcomed participants and acknowledged the leadership of policymakers, partners, and advocates working to secure Kenya's immunization agenda. Reflecting on the Istanbul Forum's call for strengthened accountability, she emphasized the urgency of ring-fenced immunization budgets at both national and county levels, as donor support declines.

She highlighted three pillars from the Istanbul Call for Action:

- Shared purpose for sustained political leadership on immunization financing.
- Parliamentary oversight to safeguard and track budget commitments with a focus on timely payment of the Gavi co-financing obligation.
- Stakeholder dialogue across government, CSOs, and media for transparency in immunization financing.

Ms. Carolyne Njuguna - *Chair, HENNET Board & East Africa Director, PATH*

Ms. Carolyne Njuguna introduced HENNET as a coalition of more than 124 health organizations operating across all 47 counties. She highlighted immunization as one of the most cost-effective public health interventions and noted that Kenya's progress, supported by Gavi's USD 84 million investment, has expanded vaccine access, including to zero-dose children. With donor support expected to decline from 2026 ahead of Kenya's full Gavi transition in 2029, she emphasized the urgent need for Parliament to lead in securing sustainable domestic financing by prioritizing health

budgets, ensuring accountability, and establishing a ring-fenced immunization budget line. She underscored that immunization is a legacy investment that protects future generations and reaffirmed HENNET's commitment to work with Parliament and partners to implement the Istanbul Call for Action and develop a national transition plan that leaves no child behind.

Technical Presentation

Immunization Financing Landscape in Kenya

Presenter: *Mr. Wesley Rotich, Futures Health Economics and Metrics Ltd.*

Mr. Rotich shared findings demonstrating progress in vaccine coverage but highlighted emerging gaps. Key insights included:

- 3.3:1 donor-to-government funding ratio for Kenya's immunization program
- Immunization budget represents 1.5% of national health spending.
- Sharp increase in zero-dose children from 14,000 (2024) to 133,000 (2025) as per the 2024 UNICEF Report on immunization status in Kenya.
- Persistent county-level disparities, particularly in arid regions.

He recommended:

- Increasing domestic allocation for sustainable immunization coverage.
- Exploring earmarked taxes, Private Public Partnerships, and philanthropic funding to bridge the donor gap in Kenya.
- Integrating immunization into the Social Health Insurance Fund (SHIF)
- Strengthening planning, data, and accountability systems.

He called for strong political leadership, financial foresight, and collaborative engagement to protect immunization gains.

Reflections From Parliamentary Champions

Hon. Dr. James Nyikal - *Chair, National Assembly Committee on Health; MP, Seme*

Hon. Nyikal outlined key strategies to strengthen Kenya's leadership and ownership of immunization financing.

- i. Align advocacy with strong policy frameworks and sessional papers, ensuring close collaboration between Parliament, ministries, and civil society.
- ii. Encourage CSOs to consistently engage, support, and hold the government accountable in fulfilling immunization financing commitments.

- iii. Consider targeted taxation (e.g., alcohol) and redirect funds from sectors such as betting, sports, and lotteries to sustain immunization financing.
- iv. Advance East African collaboration on local vaccine manufacturing to reduce import dependency and enhance sustainability.
- v. Review how insurance funds for vaccines are utilized to ensure they directly support immunization services and program delivery.

Hon. Dr. Robert Pukose - *MP for Endebess Constituency, Vice Chairperson, National Assembly Budget and Appropriations Committee*

Hon. Dr. Robert Pukose emphasized the pivotal role of county governments in immunization financing and delivery, advocating for their comprehensive inclusion in discussions on the Istanbul Call for Action. He emphasized the urgency of sustained investment to protect millions of children from preventable deaths and raised concerns over mismanagement of Facility Improvement Fund (FIF) revenues, noting that funds meant for health services are sometimes diverted to non-essential uses instead of reaching facilities. He also highlighted human resource challenges, questioning why county health workers, particularly nurses, remain on temporary terms despite shortages, and suggested absorbing them into the national system for permanency and pension benefits.

He reaffirmed the Committee's commitment to supporting both devolution and the national health sector, assuring participants that Parliament remains ready to collaborate with stakeholders to ensure efficient resource allocation, proper fund utilization, and improved service delivery in immunization and primary health care.

Hon. Bishop Emeritus Dr. Jackson Kipkemai Kosgei - *Nominated MP (Persons with Disabilities and Special Interest Groups), HENNET Immunization Champion*

Hon. Jackson Kosgei emphasized that the value of immunization is well understood in Kenya, and the priority now is ensuring sustainable programs amid declining donor funding. He called for strategic planning, including advocating for a staggered donor exit, and highlighted the Ministry of Health's leadership role in guiding policy and engaging Parliament during the transition. Stressing the need for stronger coordination among civil society, he noted that collective action strengthens advocacy and outcomes. He praised private sector commitment as a patriotic contribution and encouraged greater inclusion of African medical professionals in global and WHO programs to build trust and ownership. He concluded by reaffirming his dedication to championing Kenya's immunization agenda for current and future generations.

Ms. Risper Chebet - *Africa Regional Coordinator, Immunization Stockout Advocacy*

Ms. Chebet lauded Parliament for its leadership and commitment in strengthening the policy environment, citing progress made through the Primary Health Care Act and parliamentary engagement on immunization. She acknowledged that despite these gains, significant challenges

remain, including vaccine stockouts and delayed Gavi disbursements, which continue to strain the health system.

She appealed for the establishment of a permanent parliamentary caucus on health financing to help ring-fence resources and sustain political attention toward immunization and primary health care priorities. Recognizing the importance of coordinated efforts, Ms. Chebet applauded HENNET's impactful work at the county level, particularly in last-mile service delivery and strengthening local health systems. She raised a critical reflection on budgetary priorities, urging a closer look at how 28% of county budgets allocated to health are spent, specifically how much is directed toward immunization and service delivery.

Closing Remarks and Commitments

Hon. Dr. Nyikal closed by urging stakeholders to transform dialogue into action, especially at the county level, and to strengthen engagement with County Executives and the Council of Governors.

“Let the HPV vaccine do for our girls what the polio vaccine has done for our children.”

The meeting concluded with a **Parliamentary Commitment Board**, reaffirming dedication to sustainable immunization financing:

- **Hon. Nyikal:** “Let us vaccinate our children with our own resources.”
- **Hon. Pukose:** “For the love of our country, let us commit to vaccinate our children.”
- **Hon. Kosgei:** “Translating willingness to action.”
- **Ms. Njuguna:** “Immunization is a legacy issue—let us resource it.”

Conclusion

The Parliamentary Breakfast Meeting reinforced Kenya's shared responsibility to secure long-term immunization financing and build a resilient health system. The parliamentarians reinforced their commitment to expanding domestic resources, strengthening county engagement, improving accountability mechanisms, and ensuring seamless transition from donor-supported to self-sustained immunization programs. The collective message was clear: Kenya must protect every child, today and in future generations—and Parliament stands ready to lead the charge.

Action points

- i. HENNET to share the Istanbul Call to Action report with the chairs of the Committee on Health, Budget and Appropriations, Finance, and National Planning for tabling in Parliament.
- ii. In consultation with the Office of the Clerk of the National Assembly and the Chair of the Health committee, HENNET to plan for a second meeting in November 2025, inviting

different parliamentarians to form the parliamentary caucus on Maternal, Adolescent, and Child Health. This caucus will host the immunization caucus in line with the Istanbul Call to Action.

- iii. Parliamentarians present in the meeting support HENNET in advocacy to ensure the timely payment of the Gavi co-financing obligation to curb vaccine stockouts and the increasing number of zero-dose children in the country.