

Transition – A Missed Opportunity?

Only 7% children in the world's poorest countries receive all 11 WHO recommended vaccines. Despite impressive progress on global immunisation coverage rates, too many children are still being left behind. Polio transition poses a unique opportunity to reinforce immunisation systems and turn a situation with great risk into one that leaves a positive legacy on child and global health. **It is an opportunity that cannot be missed.** The WHO Strategic Action Plan (the Plan) must set out how the WHO will take this opportunity and use its coordinating power to create ambitious change. The plan could be improved in the following ways:

1. Strengthening Routine Immunisation

The Plan does not appropriately address how immunisation systems will be strengthened, focusing solely on maintaining essential polio functions. It does not take into account the requirements for what elements will need to continue to ensure other essential health services continue to be delivered. Further, the full extent of the impact of many of the changes, especially on immunisation systems, when polio funding ends in 2019 is still unknown.

- **Recommendation:** The Plan must be reviewed to ensure WHO transition plans are grounded in strengthening routine and essential immunisation.

2. Coordination with GPEI partners and coordination with GPEI partners and wider health stakeholders and plan

Harmonisation with other transition plans is imperative to ensure the continuation of essential polio functions and the delivery of the health services which the polio programme currently supports. It is currently unclear how this Plan works alongside the Post-Certification Strategy, country transition plans, or other agency transition plans. The plan refers to the need for a coordination mechanism to build upon existing polio transition steering committees to guide the implementation of the strategic action plan. Further, the need for a coordination mechanism to be set up to implement this plan, at global, regional and national level, is a key recommendation within the report itself.

- **Recommendation:** A coordination mechanism to guide polio transition must be determined as a matter of urgency. The coordination mechanism should set out global transition objectives.
- **Recommendation:** To ask the WHO to determine the implementation mechanism of this plan before the WHO Executive Board in January 2019.

RESULTS

3. Sustainable Financing

Continued donor support for the GPEI, for the implementation of transition plans, and for the continuation of services to fill financing gaps is a large assumption in the Plan. What will be funded going forward remains unclear, as does Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance's role in funding elements of polio transition and IPV. A sustainable financing plan must be operationalised before funding ends in 2019.

- **Recommendation:** Request an update and further details on the process and financial requirements for future GPEI activities and fundraising plans associated with this. Call on increased clarity of fundraising gaps at a country, regional and global level, for the Plan and the Post-Certification Strategy, by the WHO Executive Board in January 2019.

4. The Way Forward

This plan is in draft form. How and when will it be finalised and how will it be operationalised?

- **Recommendation:** The WHO reports to Member States at the January Executive Board and WHA every year on the progress on implementation of this plan and on country transition plans. This should include updates on sustainable financing progress and remaining gaps.
- **Recommendation:** The WHO should review elements of this Plan to strengthen accountability. The results chain, monitoring and evaluation framework, and the roadmap for implementation all need to be updated to ensure they are aligned, have clear targets, and deadlines are defined. All of these details need to be updated before countries transition at the end of 2019.