

WHO KENYA NEWSLETTER



World Health
Organization

Kenya



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Nairobi, Kenya
Polio Vaccination 3rd Round

Child gets vaccinated in Nairobi County as part of polio campaign which targeted 2.5 million children between November 11-15, 2023, in seven counties.



World Health Organization

Kenya

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A man with glasses, wearing a dark blue suit, white shirt, and blue patterned tie, is speaking into a microphone. He is standing in front of a blurred background that appears to be a presentation screen. The text "We champion health and a better future for all." is overlaid on the image in white, with a blue vertical bar to its left.

**We champion
health and a better
future for all.**



Message from the WHO Kenya Representative

Dear Partners and Colleagues,

I am pleased to share with you some important updates from the healthcare sector in Kenya in our latest newsletter.

On October 19, 2023, a significant milestone was achieved as President William Ruto signed 4 major healthcare bills into law, a crucial step forward in enhancing Universal Health Coverage in the country. This legislative progress was timely, aligning with the Universal Health Coverage Convention and Expo held in Kericho County from October 15 to 19, 2023. For an in-depth look at these developments, please turn to Page 4.

In tandem with these legislative achievements, November launched the 3rd round of the polio immunization campaign. This campaign, aiming to reach at least 2.5 million children under five years old in seven high-risk counties, is part of our concerted efforts to combat polio. Coverage of this preparation can be found on Page 6.

Further strengthening our collaborative efforts, WHO Kenya hosted a Partners' Roundtable event on November 2nd. This meeting was a platform to express gratitude to our partners, highlight the significant health milestones achieved together over the past 60 years in Kenya and point at critical areas of health support needed for achievement of health for all in Kenya. Highlights from this meeting are found on Page 8.

Other stories you will find interesting, include the WHO approval of a second malaria vaccine (Page 4), preparing for heavy rains (Page 8) and a collection of WHO Kenya archive images (Page 10).

We hope you find these updates informative and insightful. Thank you for your continued support and engagement with our initiatives.

Best regards,
Dr. Abdourahmane Diallo



Today marks a historic moment for Kenya, as vital health bills are signed, strengthening the healthcare system and ensuring quality health access for all Kenyans, leaving no one behind

- Dr. Abdourahmane Diallo



New Healthcare Plan to Leave No One Behind

The Universal Health Coverage (UHC) Expo and Convention in Kericho County, Kenya, was a significant event aimed at bringing together healthcare providers, policymakers, stakeholders, and the community to advance the agenda of universal health access. Hosted by the Ministry of Health at Kaptatet Stadium, this event spanned four days and was part of the build-up to the national Mashujaa Day celebrations on October 20.

World Health Organization (WHO) was actively involved as a key partner to the Ministry of Health and in supporting the advancement of the Universal Health Coverage agenda. WHO's engagement and contribution to the policy dialogue and strategic planning was an asset to the event's objectives.

The expo, running from October 15 to 19, 2023, served as a platform to exhibit health products, technologies, and information, reflecting the collaborative effort of various health partners in Kenya. These partnerships are crucial in the push towards comprehensive health coverage, by showcasing programmatic progress and innovations in the health sector.



OCTOBER 19, 2023

Signing the Kericho Declaration on Human Resources for Health in Kenya to ensure the adequate & equitable distribution of a productive health workforce.



If Kenya continues on this path, we should expect to have primary health care coverage of over 70% by 2032.

DR MONA AL-MUDHWAHI, WHO KENYA



A key highlight of the event was the official opening by Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua, which set the stage for the introduction of the Smart Primary Care Network (PCN). This initiative is directed at transforming healthcare service delivery through the digitization of health data, aiming to improve the efficiency and reach of health services across the county.

The theme "Afya Bora Nyumbani" underscored the convention's focus on local and home-based health solutions, aligning with the country's broader health strategy. With over 700 participants, the expo not only

served as a precursor to the national celebrations but also as a forum for important interactions and launches that are expected to have a lasting impact on the Kenyan healthcare system.

The UHC Expo and Convention represents a pivotal moment in Kenya's journey towards achieving universal health coverage. It encapsulates the nation's commitment to ensuring that all Kenyans have access to quality healthcare without financial hardship. The event in Kericho County is just one of many steps in the nation's concerted effort to realize the promise of UHC for all its citizens.

Nationwide Campaign for Health

**Polio Immunization Campaign Round 3
targeting 2.5 million children.**



Kenya has recently conducted the 3rd Round of polio vaccination campaign (November 11-15, 2023), targeting 7 high-risk counties, these are Kiambu, Kajiado, Machakos, Kitui, Lamu, Tana River and Nairobi. This campaign, part of a national effort by the Ministry of Health, was supported by WHO, UNICEF, IOM, and UNHCR, who aimed to immunize over 2.5 million children under five years old. The initiative was a response to a polio outbreak last May, which highlighted the ongoing threat of the disease in the region. Three counties including Garissa where the polio outbreak happened, had to put off the campaign due to heavy rains and floods.

In July 2023, WHO identified cases of circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 (cVDPV2) in Kenya, primarily in the Hagadera refugee camp. This strain is mutated from the oral polio vaccine (OPV) used in mass immunization. In certain conditions, like poor sanitation or overcrowding, the weakened virus in OPV can mutate and spread, especially in communities with low vaccination coverage. This was observed in the Hagadera camp, where the vaccination

coverage was below the national average.

Polio primarily affects children under five, causing permanent paralysis or death. It spreads person-to-person, predominantly through contaminated water or food. The disease can often go unrecognized as most infected individuals are asymptomatic or have mild symptoms. Kenya's immunization efforts, under the Kenya Expanded Programme on Immunization (KEPI) was established in 1980 and includes the inactivated polio vaccine introduced in 2015.

The latest campaign reflects Kenya's commitment to eradicating polio. While challenges like heavy rains and floods in Mandera, Wajir, and Garissa hindered participation, the dedication of vaccination teams, who braved adverse conditions to reach every last child, underscores the resilience of this public health endeavor. With continued support from global partners, Kenya strives to safeguard its children against polio, a key step towards achieving a healthier future for all.



High-Rise Tactics

Teams used unique tactics in high rise & populated buildings by working in teams, with mobilisers alerting the residents on each floor & vaccinators knocking at doors. Other mobilisers then waited at the ground floor to reassign & ensure no child was missed



Sunday Reach

Vaccination teams made every effort to reach every child below 5 years. They walked long distances, visited homes, estates & churches where many family's worship on Sunday.



Day Three

On Day 3 over 1.9 million children (75 %) had been vaccinated in Nairobi, Machakos, Kiambu, Kajjido, Kitui, Tana River & Lamu.

Celebrating WHO @75: Kenya's (Collaborative) Health Milestones

Kenya Partner Roundtable



The Kenya Partner Roundtable, held on November 2, 2023, provided WHO Kenya with a valued opportunity to thank its partners and to highlight the significant health milestones achieved in collaboration with partners over the past 60 years in Kenya.

We are able to do what we do because of our partners who are committed to supporting Kenya through the WHO.

DR ABDOURAHMANE DIALLO

Attended by over 30 partners, attendees positively engaged with topics including WHO's focus areas, strategic direction, resource estimates, and health milestones. During his opening remarks, a key message came from Dr Patrick Amoth, Director General of Ministry of Health who emphasized the need for health finance support.

Some highlights from the event included an immersive photo exhibition, short documentary, and presentation showcasing the impactful outcomes of WHO's partnerships. Topics included Kenya's support towards Universal Health Coverage, the malaria vaccine, tobacco-free farms, emergencies preparedness and more.

In addition, a noticeable highlight was the showcasing of a WHO Kenya electric vehicle, emphasizing its commitment to keeping environmentally clean, sustainability and innovation in healthcare delivery.

The way forward is to continue strengthening strategic partnership in health to ensure that Kenya is a leading country in the region, but also the world.

DR MONA AL-MUDHWAHI





Lilian Mutea from USAID chatting with Abraham Katana

Other attendee's included Dr Sultani; Deputy Director General, Stephen Jackson; UN Resident Coordinator, Nasir Alfaridi; Deputy Ambassador Saudi Arabia, Lilian Mutea; Deputy Mission Director of USAID, alongside representatives from the Embassy of Canada, Norway, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, France, Qatar, Japan, MSF, Safaricom, and other key stakeholders.



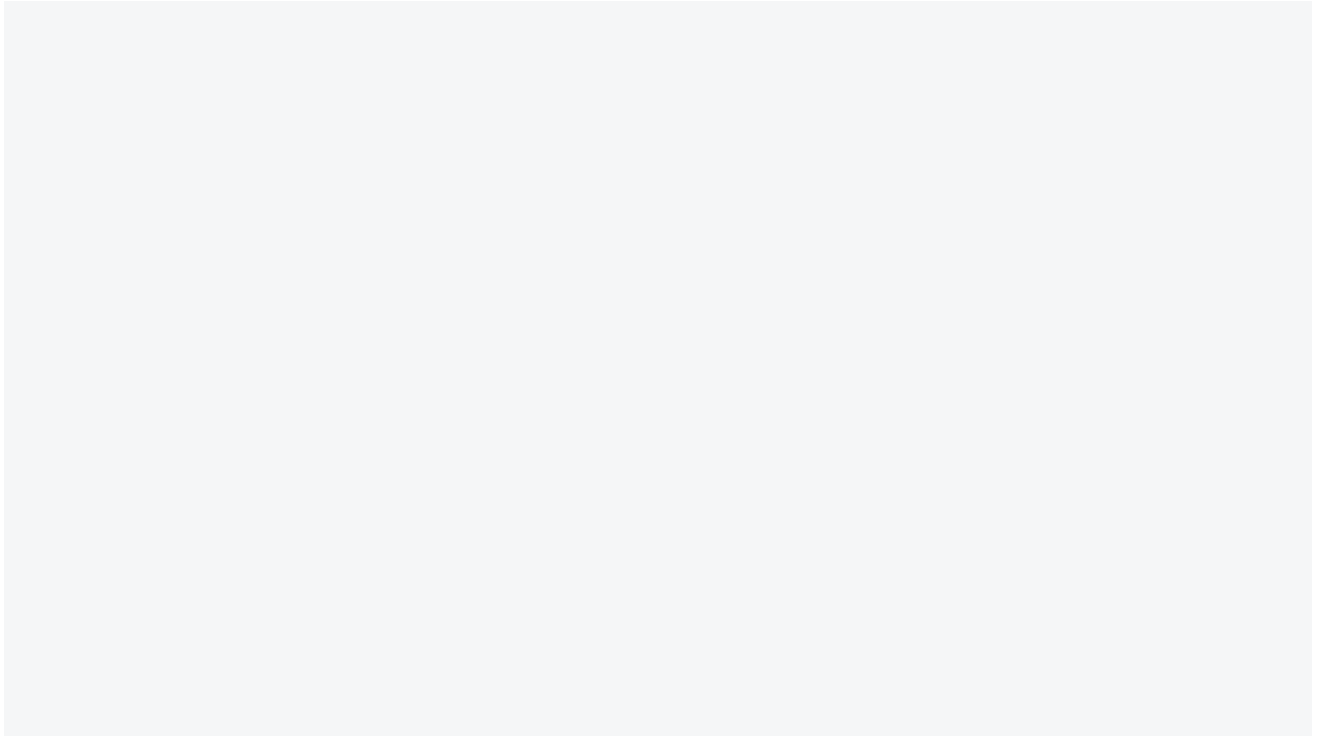
Khoko Soumahora, John Kiarie and Nelson Omwagere

John showcasing 1 of it's 2 electric vehicles WHO Kenya has recently added to it's fleet.



Dr. Abdourahmane Diallo

World Health Organisation Representative for Kenya presenting the work and key milestone of WHO in Kenya.

Partnership Roundtable **in images and video.**



Embassy of Belgiun in Kenya
Machteld Cattrysse



Embassy of Norway
Margaret Khomeini



UNON Resident Coodinator **Stephen Jackson** and
Director General Ministry of Health **Patrick Amoth.**



Watch Alice Obare Testimonial [here](#).

Tobacco-Free Farms Expansion

"My chest is full of smoke (damage from tobacco farming). I can't carry heavy items, and I can't walk for long distances. But for beans farming, there is no stress," said Alice Achieng Obare.

Building on its resounding success in Migori County, western Kenya, the "Tobacco-Free Farms" project, is now gearing up to extend its transformative impact to other tobacco-growing counties including Meru and Busia.

The innovative project which is a collaborative initiative between WHO, WFP, FAO, and the Kenyan government, empowers tobacco farmers to transition to sustainable crops like high-iron beans. It also offers training, quality inputs, and a dependable market through WFP's local procurement initiatives. Beyond bolstering farmers' livelihoods and reducing healthcare expenses, it profoundly enhances community health.

Kenya's leadership in expanding this initiative, showcases its commitment to combating the tobacco epidemic and promoting healthier, more sustainable agricultural practices, setting an inspiring precedent for other regions.

**Grow Food,
Not Tobacco.**

First Ever Joint HIV/Infectious Disease Conference

The inaugural joint HIV/ID conference 2023 marks a significant stride in global health collaboration. It was held from October 23-26 in Naivasha County, with a core objective to synergize efforts between the fields of HIV and infectious diseases.

Addressing the dual concerns, the event aimed to enhance patient care and outcomes through shared knowledge and innovation in combating health emergencies. Key outcomes include heightened collaboration, innovative management practices, and bolstered resilience against health threats. The conference was attended by over 650 participants, and underscored the importance of integration and universal health coverage, aligning with WHO's strategic outcomes for improved health service access and disease-specific coverage.



Boosting Child Health Quality: World Pneumonia Day

WHO and other stakeholders joined the Ministry of Health lead by Director General of Health, Dr Patrick Amoth to commemorate the World Pneumonia Day Celebrations at Mowlem Primary School, Embakasi Nairobi County.

Globally, pneumonia accounts for 14% of all deaths of children under 5 years. In Kenya, pneumonia remains a leading cause of morbidity and mortality for children under 5 years.

The Ministry of Health marked the day with Launch of the [National Standards for improving the Quality of Care \(QoC\) for Children](#) including small and sick newborns. The development of the QoC Guidelines was achieved through continued WHO support in collaboration with other partners and stakeholders to improve the health and wellbeing of children in Kenya.



WHO Approves Second Malaria Vaccine

In October 2023, The World Health Organization endorsed a second vaccine against malaria, known as the R21/Matrix-M vaccine, which is anticipated to be a significant breakthrough in the combat against malaria.

This new vaccine, developed by Oxford University, compliments RTS and is a readily accessible option which has shown to be safe and effective in preventing malaria in children. It is expected to roll out as early as 2024, with doses priced between \$2 and \$4.

Kenya's experience with the first malaria vaccine introduced in 2019, has been a testament to the power of vaccination in combating malaria with a remarkable drop in hospital admissions and a lower mortality rate among children.

With the combined force of the initial vaccine and the new R21/Matrix-M vaccine, there is hope to further bolster this success, potentially saving thousands of lives as it is rolled out on a wider scale.

68 Laboratory Officers Trained Ahead of El Niño

In light of the potential cholera outbreaks and health risks associated with heavy rains during El Niño, Kenya's Ministry of Health, in partnership with WHO, has taken proactive measures to strengthen the nation's preparedness.

Over the past month, a series of 5-day cholera/general microbiology hands-on training sessions in Nakuru, Machakos, Fadi, and Dadaab. A total of 68 laboratory officers from 23 counties and 2 sub-counties participated in these sessions.

The training curriculum was comprehensive and covered essential aspects of cholera management, including case detection, infection control, risk communication, lab testing, water quality assessment, and nutritional support. These intensive training efforts are designed to enhance Kenya's readiness for cholera outbreaks during erratic weather patterns, ensuring a prompt and effective response.



Ready for the Rains: Strategic Stockpiling

On 22nd August 2023, The IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC) highlighted an over 80% likelihood of the El Niño climate phenomenon causing heavy rains and wetter-than-normal conditions in the Greater Horn of Africa, including eastern Kenya, from October to December 2023.

In response, WHO Kenya's emergency preparedness and response unit, The Hub, and the Ministry of Health have collaborated to ensure the timely and fair prepositioning of essential supplies in 14 high-risk counties.

This critical preparedness includes the distribution of emergency medical and cholera kits, sturdy tents and beds, nutrition supplies like therapeutic foods and milk for children, as well as water bladders for clean water access, essential drugs, and medical supplies for effective treatment – all essential for rapid response in the anticipated impact zones.



Visit from the Kajiado Governor

On September 12, 2023, H.E. Governor Joseph Ole Lenku of Kajiado County visited the UN headquarters in Gigiri, where he met with the WHO Kenya representative, Dr. Abdourahmane Diallo.

The meeting addressed strengthening cross-border surveillance, emergency preparedness, capacity building, and support for the expected El Niño rains. They also discussed the establishment of Primary Care Networks, mental health policies, and the potential of setting up a dedicated WHO Desk in Kajiado.

This visit highlighted Kajiado County's commitment to health challenges and its collaboration with WHO, particularly after a successful Oral Cholera Vaccination campaign that exceeded targets by 104.2%.

Images of the Past Celebrating 75 Years

Milestones in Health supporting Kenya in the last 6 decades



© WHO

18 year old Janet Ndoti, sterilising instruments in the operation theatre during her training in the King George V Hospital.

1950



© WHO / PAUL ALMASY

An x-ray examination for tuberculosis of the villagers of Lusigetti by a mobile team.

1959



© WHO / ERIC SCHWAB

An emergency operation carried out by the light of a paraffin lamp, solutions to day-to-day problems.

1967



© WHO / HARRY ANENDEN

Kenya National Aids Control Programme van outside the Ministry of Health stand at Agricultural Fair.

1972



© WHO / C. SIMAYU

Kenya's last recorded case of smallpox, during an outbreak in the Mandera District.

1977



© WHO / M. SENTIS

Transport of essential drugs from the Central Medical Store in Nairobi to a rural hospital.

1980



© WHO / MILTON GRANT

A single ration kit contained enough essential drugs for 3000 new cases arrives at a health centre.

1990



Acknowledgements

EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS

Partner support for our work in Kenya is critical, however, some key priority areas remain underfunded. More direct support to WHO Kenya would allow us to respond to needs in the country. It would allow WHO technical staff to spend more time on providing support to the government and working towards SDG targets. Reorienting funds to where they are most needed, guided by GPW13, would allow WHO to address underfunded areas as well as plan for longer term approaches to health systems strengthening. A big thank you to our key “thematic funders”. The funds our partners provide give a degree of flexibility that allows WHO to be more effective and efficient in allocating funds and to focus on results for our joint priorities.





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Organization**

Kenya

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