

WHO KENYA NEWSLETTER



Kisumu County

Thanks to timely treatment,
Maurine Achieng's son beats
severe malaria.



**World Health
Organization**

Kenya





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JANUARY - JUNE 2026 | VOL 20

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



Message from **Dr Kimambo**, WHO Representative a.i. to Kenya

Dear Partners and Colleagues,

It is my pleasure to present WHO Kenya's newsletter covering January to June 2026, reflecting our continued collaboration with the Government of Kenya and partners in advancing national health priorities.

This edition captures a remarkable six months. Kenya made history as the first country in East Africa to launch the six-month HIV prevention injection lenacapavir, bringing a new prevention option to those who need it most (page x). In Kakuma refugee camp, over 2,300 refugees received essential dermatological care and 20 healthcare providers were trained, a reminder that quality healthcare must reach every community (page x). Nairobi hosted the World Health Summit Regional Meeting 2026, the first time WHO co-convened the summit at a global or regional level, welcoming over 3,000 participants from 80 countries (page x).

Kenya is also taking bold steps toward health sovereignty, advancing local manufacturing of vaccines and medicines (page x), while over 12,000 farmers have transitioned from tobacco to food crops including high-iron beans, improving both livelihoods and health (page x). Adding to this momentum, President Ruto launched the Every Woman Every Newborn Everywhere Acceleration Plan, reinforcing Kenya's commitment to ending preventable maternal and newborn deaths (page x). These are among the many highlights we hope you will enjoy inside.

I thank all our partners and donors for your continued commitment and collaboration in improving health for all Kenyans.

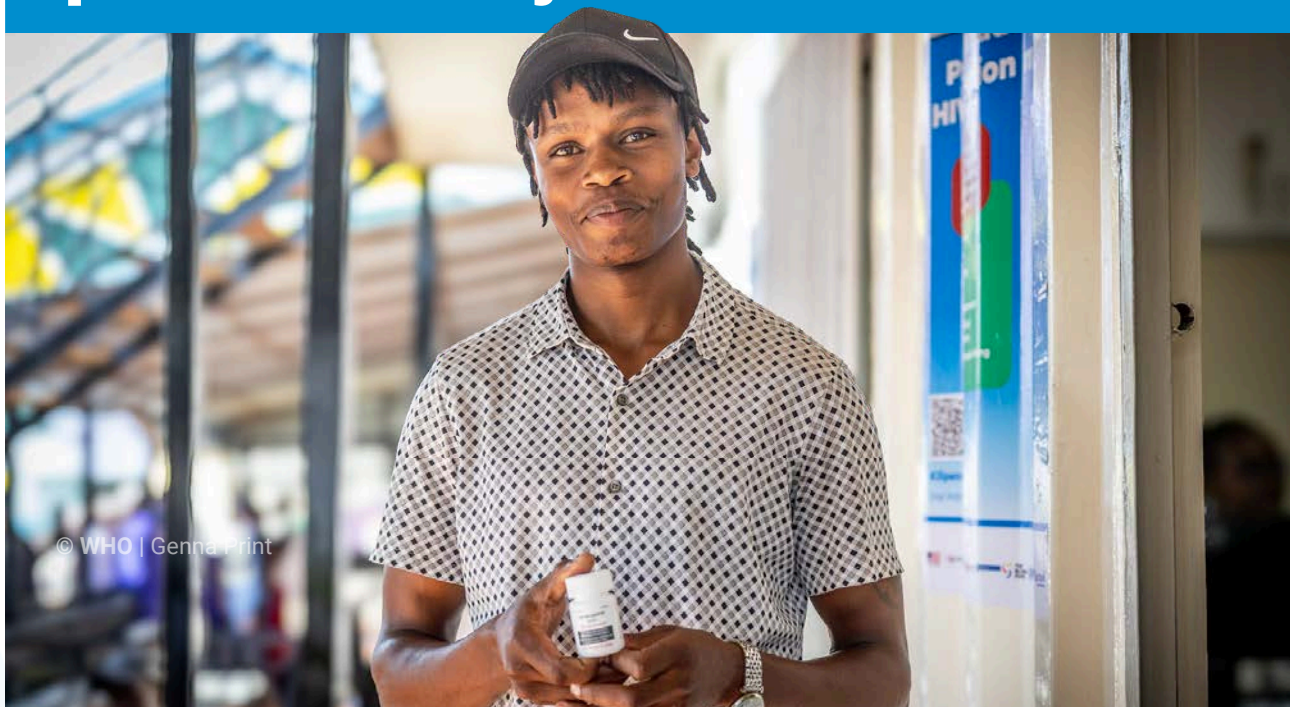
Best wishes,

Dr Neema Rusibamayila Kimambo



Kenya Leads **HIV Prevention**

Kenya becomes first in East Africa to launch **six-month HIV prevention injection**



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"Patient zero zero one. That is me. I'm feeling protected and happy to know that I'm going to maintain my status as negative."

**Samson Mutua, 27
years old from
Karangware, Nairobi.**

Riruta Health Centre

In 2013, Kenya recorded 110,000 new HIV infections. By 2024, that number had fallen to 15,000, a remarkable reduction. Yet with 1.4 million Kenyans still living with HIV, prevention remains critical.

Kenya has become the first country in East Africa, and one of the first globally, to roll out lenacapavir, a new injectable option that protects against HIV for six months with just two injections per year. Clinical studies show it can be up to 96% effective in preventing HIV infection. The initial rollout is backed by 21,000 starter doses targeting 15 high-burden counties including Nairobi, Kisumu and Mombasa with plans to expand across all 47 counties. The injection is free of charge at public health facilities and sits alongside existing prevention tools including daily oral PrEP and condoms.

WHO is proud that have provided technical guidance, supported adaptation of national clinical guidelines, trained healthcare workers and strengthened monitoring systems to track uptake and impact.



[Read More](#)

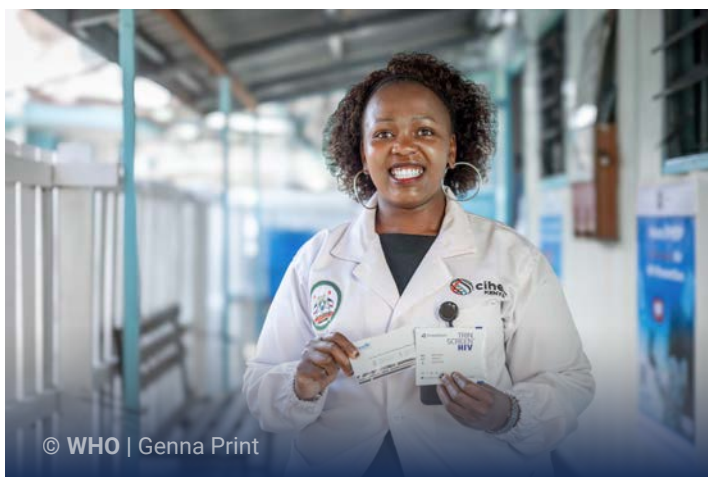

WHO KENYA A.I. REPRESENTATIVE Dr Neema Rusibamayila Kimambo

"Together, we can accelerate toward a future where no one gets HIV, everyone who needs treatment receives it, and no community is left behind," said Dr Kimambo, during the launch of lenacapavir at Riruta Health Centre.



FIRST PREVENTIVE INJECTION Samson Mutua

Samson Mutua, 27, becomes the first Kenyan to receive lenacapavir, administered as a subcutaneous injection in the lower abdomen.



REDUCED WORKLOAD Carol Njomo

With this injection we are so excited. It is only twice a year and it will reduce the workload in our facilities too," said Carol Njomo, HIV testing counsellor at Riruta Health Centre, Nairobi.

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**Skin Health** in Refugee Settings

Over **2,300 Refugees Treated** and **20 Healthcare Providers Trained** in a Migrant Health Outreach



"With increasing war, climate change, and economic crises, it is essential to identify suitable and scalable solutions to address skin health during prolonged stays in refugee camps."

Dr Valeska Padovese,
Chair of the Migrant
Health Working Group

In March 2026, the International Foundation for Dermatology carried out a one-week medical outreach at Kakuma Refugee Camp, home to 308,415 registered refugees primarily from South Sudan, Somalia, DRC and Ethiopia. A team of ten dermatologists, including five Kenyan specialists and two WHO medical officers, provided clinical consultations to over 2,300 refugees, the majority aged 15 to 35.

The most prevalent conditions identified included fungal infections, atopic dermatitis and scabies. Twenty healthcare providers and ten community volunteers received on-the-job training, and a teledermatology service was introduced to enable remote specialist consultations beyond the outreach period. All data was captured using the WHO-monitored DHIS2 system to inform policy and planning at government and international level. The outreach marks the beginning of a long-term effort to improve dermatological care for vulnerable communities in the region.

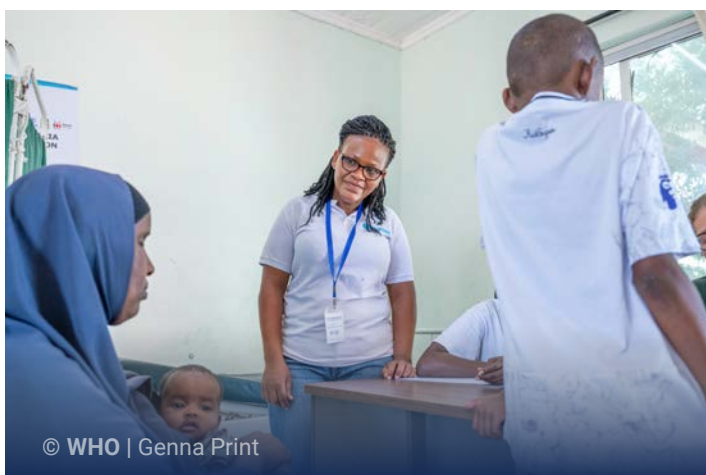


**SUB-GROUP LEAD****Dr Juan Ortiz Alvarez**

"We must acknowledge the outstanding work carried out not only by the participating Kenyan and international dermatologists, but also by the whole support team, including drivers, translators, cultural mediators, and local healthcare workers."

**KENYAN DERMATOLOGIST****Dr Gacheri P Kathiri**

"The experience brought to light the immense dermatological burden in underserved regions, ranging from common skin infections and inflammatory conditions to neglected tropical diseases, often compounded by limited access to dermatologic care and essential resources."



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WHO KENYA NTD SPECIALIST**Dr Esther Kinyeru**

"Treating over 2,300 patients in one week is significant, but the training we left behind is what will make a lasting difference. Health workers can now consult remotely, ensuring continuity of care for one of Kenya's most underserved communities."

[Read Full Story](#)



#WHS Nairobi 2026



Reimagining **Africa's Health Systems**

WHO advances Africa's health agenda at the **World Health Summit Regional Meeting**

"We are at a defining moment for health in Africa. Through shared responsibility and partnership, we can build stronger, more resilient and more equitable health systems."

Dr Mohamed Janabi

**WHO Regional
Director for Africa**

The World Health Summit Regional Meeting 2026, held from 27-29 April at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, brought together more than 3,000 participants from over 80 countries under the theme "Reimagining Africa's Health Systems: Innovation, Integration and Interdependence."

Hosted by Aga Khan University in partnership with WHO, the Ministry of Health Kenya and Africa CDC, this marked the first time WHO co-convened a meeting with the World Health Summit at either a global or regional level.

Over three days, more than 80 sessions and 400 speakers including 16 health ministers addressed health systems strengthening, universal health coverage and digital innovation. A landmark outcome was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between WHO and Aga Khan University establishing the first WHO collaborative initiative in Africa focused on women's cancers, supporting the Global Breast Cancer Initiative and Cervical Cancer Elimination Initiative across six East African countries.




[Read More](#)


PRESIDENT WILLIAM RUTO **Opening Ceremony**

"Africa is no longer a passive participant in global health, but an active architect of its direction, its priorities, and its outcomes," said President William Ruto, during the opening of the World Health Summit Regional Meeting 2026.



DR MOHAMED JANABI, **WHO Regional Director for Africa**

Dr Janabi delivered keynote addresses across 6 high-level sessions at the World Health Summit Regional Meeting, covering health security, financing, digital health sovereignty and the WHO AFRO Regional Strategic Plan 2026-2030.



UNON PLENARY SESSION **Delegates From Around the World**

More than 3,000 participants from over 80 countries convened in Nairobi for the World Health Summit Regional Meeting 2026, engaging across 80 sessions with over 400 speakers including 16 health ministers from across Africa and beyond.



Images from the World Health Summit Regional Meeting



WOMENS CANCER SUPPORT WHO and AKU Signing

WHO and Aga Khan University signed a Memorandum of Understanding establishing the first WHO collaborative initiative in Africa on women's cancers, strengthening screening, diagnosis and treatment across six East African countries.



VIRTUAL REALITY WHO Booth

Visitors at the WHO exhibition booth experience a virtual reality installation immersing them in a polio vaccination campaign, showcasing WHO's frontline work to protect more than 200 million children across the African region.



BERLIN 2026 WHO and WHS President

Dr Mohamed Janabi and Professor Axel Pries met to take stock of the summit's outcomes. "The success of this summit has shown what is possible," said Dr Janabi. "We must sustain this momentum towards Berlin," where the annual World Health Summit takes place in October 2026.

April 2026



ORGANISATIONAL PRESENCE WHO at the Health Summit

Almost 90 WHO staff drawn from country offices, 3 regional offices and WHO headquarters in Geneva attended the meeting, reflecting WHO's strong institutional commitment to Africa's health agenda alongside 3 WHO Regional Directors.



WHO LEADERSHIP 3 WHO Regional Directors

For the first time, three WHO Regional Directors convened together at the World Health Summit Regional Meeting 2026 in Nairobi: Dr Mohamed Janabi (AFRO), Dr Hanan Balkhy (EMRO) and Dr Hans Kluge (EURO).



HIGH LEVEL DELEGATION United for Health

The Regional Meeting was hosted by Aga Khan University and co-convened by WHO, the Ministry of Health Kenya and Africa CDC, bringing together heads of state, health ministers and global health leaders from over 80 countries to shape Africa's health agenda.

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Health Sovereignty **for Africa**

Kenya builds capacity to produce its own vaccines

"When a country can produce its own vaccines, it can protect its own people without depending on external supply chains that may not always be reliable or accessible.

Dr Edwin Kojo Ogara

**WHO Kenya
Technical Lead for
Essential Drugs and
Medicines**

Africa carries 25% of the global disease burden yet produces less than 6% of its medical supplies, imports between 70-100% of its finished pharmaceuticals, and manufactures less than 1% of its vaccines. Kenya imports approximately 70% of its pharmaceuticals, leaving the health system exposed to supply disruptions and price volatility.

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the consequences of this dependency, with African countries consistently last to receive vaccines as wealthier nations secured supply. Kenya has responded with a clear commitment to building domestic manufacturing capacity across medicines and vaccines, with the goal of becoming a regional hub for health product production.

In a significant milestone, Kenya became one of only six African countries selected for the WHO and Medicines Patent Pool mRNA Technology Transfer Programme, with the Kenya BioVax Institute now building end-to-end vaccine production capacity at its Embakasi facility. Further 2026 local manufacturing milestones are outlined on the next page.

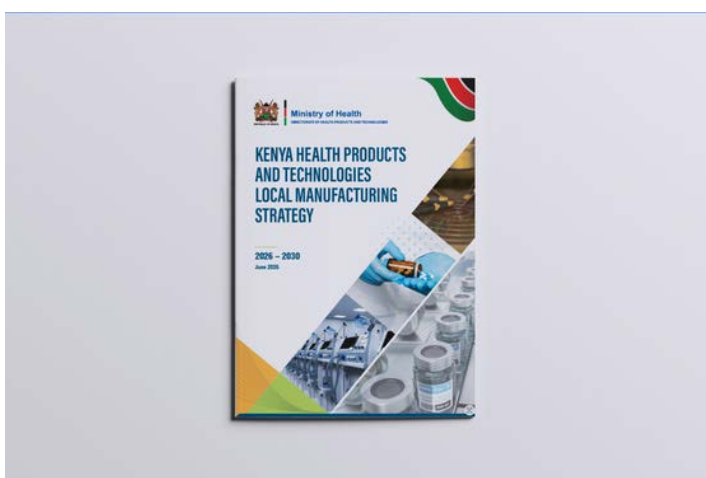


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**STAKEHOLDER ALIGNMENT****2nd Eastern Africa Global Health Security Summit**

Over 1,500 participants convened in Nairobi under the theme "Catalysing Collaboration and Local Manufacturing of Health Products for Africa's Sovereign Health Security," producing regional commitments on regulatory harmonisation, pooled procurement and sustainable financing.

**GLOBAL COMMITMENTS****Africa Forward Summit**

In May, Kenya hosted the Africa Forward Summit, where a High-Level Ministerial Roundtable accelerated discussions on local pharmaceutical and vaccine manufacturing through sustainable financing and technology transfer. The summit also saw the launch of AIM2030, targeting a doubling of Africa's pharmaceutical manufacturing capacity by 2030, attended by President Ruto.

**NATIONAL ROADMAP****Launch of Health Products and Technologies Manufacturing Strategy**

With 70% of Kenya's pharmaceuticals currently imported, the Ministry of Health launched its first-ever 5-year strategy to strengthen domestic production of health products and technologies, positioning Kenya as a regional manufacturing hub.

**Grow Food** Not Tobacco

Over 12,000 farmers leave tobacco behind

[Read Full Story](#)

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"We now pay school fees using income from the beans and I can also feel the difference in our health. Beans make our bodies strong and they taste delicious."

**Faith, Former
Tobacco Farmer**

Ataba village, Busia

In Kenya's tobacco-growing regions, a quiet but significant transformation is underway. The Tobacco Free Farms initiative, launched in Kenya in 2021 and operating across Migori, Busia, Bungoma and Meru counties, has supported over 12,400 farmers to transition from tobacco to food crops. Over 11,540 acres now yield more than 3.8 million kilograms of produce including high-iron beans, groundnuts and finger millet, with farmers reporting a threefold increase in income.

The shift matters beyond economics. Tobacco farming exposes workers to nicotine poisoning, with as many as one in four farmers affected by green tobacco sickness. Women face particular risks, with 50 per cent of tobacco-farming households reporting that pregnant women participated in growing activities. According to FAO, bean farmers earn an average profit of 98,700 shillings per acre annually, compared to just 15,224 shillings for tobacco farmers. The initiative is made possible through collaboration between WHO, FAO, WFP, UNCDF, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Agriculture and partner organisations.



**ON-THE-GROUND****Sensitization Meeting**

Farmers gather in Ataba village, Busia County, for a community sensitisation session on the benefits of transitioning from tobacco to alternative food crops, supported by WHO, WFP, FAO and county government officials.

**GREEN TOBACCO SICKNESS****Tobacco Farmer, Gerald Silas**

Gerald Silas from Busia County, stands beside his field nearing harvest. Each day, a tobacco worker may absorb as much nicotine as found in 50 cigarettes through handling wet leaves alone, with one in four tobacco farmers affected by green tobacco sickness.

**WHO KENYA, A.I. REPRESENTATIVE****Dr Neema Rusibamayila Kimambo**

Dr Kimambo addresses World No Tobacco Day 2026 commemorations in Embu County, one of the counties targeted for expansion of Kenya's Tobacco Free Farms initiative in 2026.


[Read More](#)

Closing the **Cancer Gap**

Kenya strengthens women's cancer care through integrated screenings



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"Early detection saves lives. This project ensures women in Nyandarua and Bungoma no longer have to travel far to access the screening that could save their life."

Dr Neema Kimambo
WHO Representative a.i. to Kenya.

In Kenya, breast and cervical cancer together claim 16 women's lives every day, nine from cervical cancer and seven from breast cancer. Kenya is one of only three African countries, alongside Côte d'Ivoire and Zimbabwe, selected to implement the WHO African Region Women's Integrated Cancer Services project, supported by Roche.

Piloted in Nyandarua and Bungoma counties, the project provides integrated screening for breast and cervical cancer alongside non-communicable diseases including hypertension, diabetes and mental health, targeting at least 10,000 women. By embedding cancer services within primary healthcare, the model aims to close the gap between need and access.

Kenya records approximately 5,845 new cervical cancer cases annually, with 3,591 deaths. The project serves as a model for scaling integrated cancer care across all 47 counties, supporting Kenya's National Cervical Cancer Elimination Action Plan 2026-2030.





KNOWLEDGE IS PREVENTION Accessible Tools

Divinza Ochela and patient Asha Akinyi review educational materials at a WICS session in Bungoma County. Simple, accessible tools are essential to helping women understand the importance of regular cancer screening.



EARLY DETECTION Cervical Cancer Screening

Nurse Stella Mukwanja administers a cervical cancer screening test to patient Cynthia Mabele at Kabula Health Centre, Bungoma County. For Cynthia, it is her first screening.



Every Woman. Every Newborn. Everywhere.

Kenya has intensified efforts to tackle **preventable maternal and newborn deaths** with EWENE Acceleration Plan



“Every maternal death is a profound tragedy, especially because the overwhelming majority of these deaths are preventable.”

H.E. President Ruto

Statehouse

On May 28 2026, Kenya launched the Every Woman Every Newborn Everywhere (EWENE) Acceleration Plan 2026-2028 at State House, Nairobi, marking a high-level national commitment to end preventable maternal and newborn deaths.

Despite 89 per cent skilled birth attendance and 98 per cent of pregnant women accessing at least one antenatal care visit, Kenya still loses approximately 16 mothers and 90 newborns every day.

The plan targets 26 high-burden counties through a six-month Rapid Results Initiative running until November 2026. Key commitments include KSh 4 billion allocated through the Social Health Authority to cover premiums for pregnant women, KSh 1 billion to KEMSA for maternal and newborn health commodities, KSh 2.5 billion for family planning supplies, and the recruitment and deployment of 5,000 nurses and midwives nationwide.




WHO REPRESENTATIVE A.I. KENYA
Dr Neema Rusibamayila Kimambo

"Africa accounts for roughly 70 per cent of all global maternal deaths and half of all newborn deaths, not because solutions do not exist, but because the systems to deliver them have not been built, sustained, or held to account at the pace required. Today, Kenya is choosing a different path."


HEALTH WORKFORCE
Community Health Promoters

Community health promoters attend the launch, central to the plan's implementation. President Ruto committed KSh 4 billion for pregnant women's coverage, KSh 1 billion for maternal commodities and the recruitment of 5,000 nurses and midwives nationwide.


ESSENTIAL HEALTH SUPPLIES
Flagging off Equipment

President William Ruto flags off modern medical equipment dispatched to 25 high-burden counties as part of the launch, including maternal and newborn health supplies targeting a 15% reduction in preventable deaths by November 2026.

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Highlight Stories





A Warm Welcome to Our New WHO Representative a.i. to Kenya



WHO



To start 2026, the WHO Kenya office and the Kenyan government warmly welcomed Dr Neema Rusibamayila Kimambo as WHO's new a.i. Representative to Kenya.

A senior paediatrician and public health specialist with over 25 years of experience, she previously served as WHO Representative to Malawi (2022-2025), Acting Representative to Ghana (2019-2021), and Senior Adviser to the former President of Tanzania on maternal and child health. Kenya warmly welcomes Dr Kimambo and looks forward to the progress ahead under her leadership.



WHO Launches Global School Food Guidelines

WHO Kenya, Ministry of Health,
Ministry of Education

WHO launched its first-ever Guidelines on Policies and Interventions to Create Healthy School Food Environments, recommending that schools set nutrition standards for foods served or sold on premises, improve food provision, and use nudging strategies to steer children toward healthier choices.

The guidelines are critical for Kenya, which provides free school meals to approximately 2.6 million children, targeting 10 million by 2030, with learners in boarding schools and arid regions depending heavily on school meals for daily nutrition.



Short **Highlight Stories**

Kenya Commemorates World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day



WHO, Ministry of Health, KNPHI, AMREF, The END Fund & more.



Kenya joined global World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day commemorations in Kajiado County, launching four policy and technical documents including a Training Package for Supply Chain Management of NTD Health Products and Technologies to strengthen medicine delivery to remote communities.

Kenya celebrated achievements of eliminating Guinea Worm (2018) and sleeping sickness (2025), with lymphatic filariasis and trachoma on track for elimination by 2027, demonstrating clear commitment to the WHO Neglected Tropical Diseases Roadmap goals.

New Partnership to Transform Health Workforce Education



WHO Kenya, Novo Nordisk Foundation, Ministry of Health



Kenya has doubled its nurses and doctors over the past decade, yet still needs over 114,000 additional health professionals across 31 roles by 2031.

WHO Kenya and the Novo Nordisk Foundation have launched a USD 1.9 million partnership (2025-2028) to transform health workforce education through competency-based training, with a focus on preventing and managing cardiometabolic diseases including diabetes and heart disease. "Competency-based education ensures our health workers are prepared to address the real health challenges communities face," said Dr Neema Kimambo, WHO Representative a.i. to Kenya.





January / February



Maternal and Perinatal Death Surveillance Committee

Ministry of Health, WHO,
UNFPA & UNICEF

With Kenya losing approximately 5,000 mothers and 30,000 newborns to preventable causes every year, Health CS Aden Duale inaugurated the National Maternal and Perinatal Death Surveillance and Response Steering Committee on 23 February.

The WHO-endorsed approach ensures every maternal and newborn death is reviewed, learned from and acted upon at facility, sub-county and county level. Key reforms include maternity reimbursements for lower-level facilities, strengthened ambulance referral systems and reinforced blood transfusion services to address critical shortages.

Kenya Hosts East African Forum on Traditional Medicine

Ministry of Health, WHO, KEMRI, TCIH
Coalition, East African partner states & more.

Kenya hosted the inaugural East African Forum on Traditional, Complementary and Integrative Medicine in Nairobi on 24-25 February, bringing together policymakers, regulators, researchers and practitioners from seven countries: Burundi, DRC, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda.

With up to 80 per cent of East Africans relying on traditional medicine as a first point of care, the forum concluded with the launch of the East African Network on Traditional, Complementary and Integrative Medicine to coordinate regional policy, regulation and research aligned with the WHO Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025-2034.



Short **Highlight Stories**

Strengthening Leishmaniasis Diagnosis in Turkana



WHO, Ministry of Health, Turkana County Health Department



Turkana County bears the second highest burden of visceral leishmaniasis in Kenya after West Pokot, yet current rapid diagnostic tests have a sensitivity of only 67%, meaning roughly one in three cases risks being missed or misdiagnosed.

WHO supported a four-day hands-on training in Lopiding and Lodwar County Hospital, equipping health workers with bone marrow aspiration techniques, the WHO-recommended gold standard for diagnosis. Trained health workers will cascade skills to colleagues across Turkana and neighbouring counties, building sustainable diagnostic capacity toward leishmaniasis elimination.

WHO Tool Measures Child Development Across Kenya



WHO, Ministry of Health, UNICEF, National Bureau of Statistics, Aga Khan University



For the first time, Kenya measured how children under five are growing, thinking and communicating as part of the Kenya Mini Demographic and Health Survey 2025/26, covering 30,000 households across 1,000 communities in all 47 counties.

The survey incorporated WHO's Global Scales for Early Development, assessing children from birth to age three, alongside UNICEF's Early Childhood Development Index 2030 for ages three to five. WHO trained 150 data collectors nationwide. Results will directly inform national policies and spending decisions for Kenya's youngest citizens.





Africa's Second Military Emergency Medical Team



Kenya Defence Forces,
Ministry of Health, WHO



Kenya is developing its first Type 2 Emergency Medical Team, deployable within 48 hours and capable of full surgical care, making it only the second such military team in Africa. The Kenya Defence Forces, Ministry of Health and WHO held a two-day Governance Orientation Workshop, establishing a formal governance structure and time-bound roadmap toward WHO classification.

Building on November 2024 induction training for 30 military health professionals, the team will be deployable across the East African Community and beyond.

Kenya Launches 5-Year Health Security Plan



Ministry of Health, KNPHI, WHO, Kenya Defence Forces, Palladium, KEMRI & more.



Kenya launched its Second National Action Plan for Health Security 2026-2030, a roadmap to help the country better prevent, detect and respond to health emergencies such as cholera, mpox and Marburg. Informed by Kenya's Joint External Evaluation in September 2024, the plan identifies three critical gaps: under-resourced sub-national health systems, slow emergency fund release, and poorly connected surveillance and laboratory systems.

Five operational plans were also launched to translate strategy into action across human, animal and environmental health sectors.



Short **Highlight Stories**

Kenya and Ghana Share Health Reform Lessons



WHO Kenya, WHO Ghana, Ministry of Health Kenya, Ministry of Health Ghana



Senior health leaders from Ghana spent a week in Nairobi learning from Kenya's landmark 2023 health reforms, including the Social Health Insurance Act, Primary Health Care Act and Digital Health Act. One standout lesson: Kenya reduced fraudulent insurance claims from 36% to just 7% through biometric verification and geofencing technology that requires doctors to be within 500 metres of the facility where they are seeing a patient.

Ghana is now exploring how to adapt Kenya's digital innovations for its own Universal Health Coverage rollout.

Emergency Health Supplies Reach Flood Affected Counties



WHO, Ministry of Health, County Governments



Flooding across 18 counties during Kenya's long rains displaced over 50,000 families, disrupting access to safe water and increasing the risk of cholera and malaria.

On March 18, WHO handed over emergency health kits valued at KSh 10 million to the Ministry of Health, including cholera case management kits, rapid diagnostic kits, water treatment supplies and trauma kits to support approximately 5,000 people. Additional supplies over the next three months were also handed over to reach over 100,000 people.





Kenya Marks World TB Day with 90,900 Treated in 2025



Ministry of Health, WHO, National TB and Lung Disease Programme & more.



"Yes, we can kick TB out of Kenya!," said CS Aden Duale.

Kenya marked World TB Day at the University of Nairobi under the theme "Yes! We Can End TB," reporting 90,900 people diagnosed and initiated on treatment in 2025, representing 81 per cent of the estimated burden. Kenya has achieved a 45 per cent reduction in TB incidence and 58 per cent decline in TB-related deaths since 2015. Yet 63 per cent of cases are among men, prompting targeted outreach including an End TB concert headlined by Bensoul, a celebrated artist and TB survivor.

Nairobi Hosts Global Maternal & Newborn Health Conference



Ministry of Health, Africa CDC, WHO, Council of Governors, UNICEF, UNFPA & more.



Nairobi hosted the 2026 International Maternal and Newborn Health Conference, convening over 1,800 delegates from more than 100 countries under the theme "Moving Forward. Together." In Kenya, 15 mothers and 92 newborns die every day from largely preventable causes. Kenya used the conference to launch the Every Woman Every Newborn Everywhere Acceleration Plan 2026-2028 and showcase ongoing reforms.

"As we approach 2030, this is a critical moment to take stock of progress and accelerate solutions together," said Dr Neema Kimambo, WHO Representative a.i. to Kenya.



Short **Highlight Stories**

Kenya Launches Plan to Expand Eye Care Access

Ministry of Health, WHO,
20+ eye health partners

Only 6.7 per cent of Kenyans who need vision correction can currently access it, meaning roughly 93 out of every 100 people who need spectacles go without.

Kenya launched the SPECS 2030 Initiative on 2 April, in collaboration with WHO and over 20 eye health partners, targeting a 40 percentage point increase in coverage by 2030, moving from 6.7 per cent to 46.7 per cent.

Uncorrected poor vision affects children's learning, workplace productivity and road safety across the country.

Kenya Welcomes New UN Resident Coordinator



United Nations Kenya



UN Secretary-General António Guterres appointed Garry Conille of Haiti as the new UN Resident Coordinator in Kenya on 1 April.

Mr Conille brings over 20 years of experience across the UN system, international development and humanitarian affairs, including two terms as Prime Minister of Haiti.

He holds a Doctor of Medicine and a Master's in Health Policy and Administration, a background Dr Neema Kimambo warmly noted when welcoming him to the WHO Kenya office, where she showcased the work WHO is doing to advance health for all Kenyans.





April



Nairobi Hosts Global Polio Eradication Coordinators Retreat



WHO, MOH, GPEI partners, Gavi, UNICEF, US CDC, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, KEMRI



Nairobi hosted the Global Polio Eradication Initiative Coordinators Retreat in April, followed by the Polio Laboratory Directors Annual Meeting in May, bringing together health leaders from across Africa to take stock of progress and strengthen regional collaboration.

While polio detections are declining in 2026, persistent transmission means the job is not finished. Laboratory experts discussed how to strengthen poliovirus surveillance and advance innovation to stop transmission across the continent. Kenya has not reported circulating variant poliovirus cases in over 15 months.

Kenya Conducts First Immunisation Review Since 2018



Ministry of Health, WHO, Gavi, UNICEF, county governments & more.



Teams from the Ministry of Health, county governments, WHO and partners conducted field data collection across 16 counties as part of Kenya's first comprehensive immunisation programme review since 2018. Kenya has made notable progress in recent years, introducing new vaccines including HPV, malaria and typhoid conjugate vaccines.

However, recurring outbreaks of cholera and polio continue to underscore the need for stronger surveillance and sustained investment. Findings will inform Kenya's next National Immunisation Strategy to ensure no child is left behind.



Short **Highlight Stories**

Mombasa Hosts Health Security Convention

KNPHI, Ministry of Health,
WHO, KEMRI & more.

Over 1,200 policymakers, scientists and health professionals gathered in Mombasa from 5-8 May for the Kenya Health Security Convention, organised by the Kenya National Public Health Institute under the theme "Advancing Health Security through Science, Innovation and Equity." The convention addressed a critical challenge: fragmented knowledge sharing and weak research dissemination continue to hinder disease prevention and policy-making.

"Preparedness must be embedded in our systems, not activated only during crises," said PS Ouma Oluga, representing Health CS Aden Duale.

UN Secretary-General Visits Nairobi

United Nations,
Government of Kenya

UN Secretary-General António Guterres visited Nairobi on 10-11 May, joining President William Ruto for the groundbreaking of a USD 340 million expansion of the UN Office at Nairobi, the largest UN infrastructure investment in Africa in its 80-year history.

The expansion will increase conference capacity from 2,000 to 9,000 delegates, positioning Nairobi as the third largest UN hub after New York and Geneva. "These are more than buildings. They are a vote of confidence in Africa's place at the heart of international cooperation," said Secretary-General Guterres.





Kenya Recognised for Eliminating Sleeping Sickness



Ministry of Health,
WHO



At the 79th World Health Assembly in Geneva, WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus presented Health CS Aden Duale with a certificate recognising Kenya's elimination of sleeping sickness, a disease that had challenged western Kenya for over a century across counties including Busia, Siaya and Homa Bay, with zero indigenous cases recorded since 2009.

Other notable achievements for Kenya during the Assembly included shared lessons with South Sudan on maternal and newborn care in hard-to-reach communities, and CS Duale calling for global equity in Ebola response funding.

The Elders visit to WHO Emergency Hub Warehouse



WHO, The Elders



Members of The Elders, the independent group of global leaders founded by Nelson Mandela including former presidents and Nobel Peace Laureates, visited WHO's Emergency Preparedness and Response Hub in Nairobi.

The hub, a WHO African Region facility based in Kenya, coordinates responses to over 140 health emergencies annually, shipping more than 2,000 medical supply consignments to around 20 countries in 2025 alone. The Elders were introduced to the Preparedness Data Exchange, an AI-enabled system launched in March that shortens the time between disease signal detection and coordinated response.



Short **Highlight Stories**

WHO Deploys Supplies from Nairobi to Support Ebola Response

WHO, Ministry of Health DRC,
MONUSCO

When the Bundibugyo Ebola outbreak was declared in DRC's Ituri province on 15 May, WHO's regional emergency hub based in Nairobi dispatched supplies within 72 hours, demonstrating the critical value of having emergency stockpiles in Africa.

Combined with facilities in Kinshasa and Dakar, WHO delivered 11.5 tonnes of supplies including personal protective equipment, medical kits and water, sanitation and hygiene materials. Unlike classic Ebola, there is no approved vaccine or treatment for the Bundibugyo strain, making speed of response essential to saving lives.

WHO Supports Ebola Preparedness Training in Busia

WHO, Ministry of Health, KNPHI,
MSF, Busia County Government

With Busia bordering Uganda, Kenya moved swiftly to strengthen border preparedness following the Ebola outbreak declaration in DRC. 50 health and non-health workers from across Busia County took part in WHO-supported Ebola preparedness training, conducting a simulation exercise to strengthen coordination for suspected cases and a field drill at Alupe Hospital, the proposed isolation centre.

The drill covered case detection, safe patient transfer, infection prevention, waste management and discharge procedures, bringing together WHO, Ministry of Health, KNPHI, MSF and Busia County Government.





May / June



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WHO Engages Youth and Marks **World No Tobacco Day** in Embu

WHO, Ministry of Health,
Embu County Government

With 12,000 Kenyans dying from tobacco every year, WHO took its prevention message directly to the next generation, engaging medical students in Embu County on the dangers of tobacco, e-cigarettes and nicotine pouches increasingly marketed to young people through social media. Days later, WHO joined Kenya's national World No Tobacco Day commemorations in Embu under the theme "Unmasking the Appeal: Countering Tobacco and Nicotine Addiction."

"The tobacco industry is recruiting a new generation of nicotine users. Let us expose the tactics," said Dr Neema Kimambo, WHO Representative a.i. to Kenya.

Kenya's Health Sector Aligns at Inter-Governmental **Forum**

Ministry of Health, Council of Governors,
Development Partners in Health Kenya

The 23rd Health Sector Intergovernmental Consultative Forum, themed "Strengthening Accountability and Collaboration for Sustainable Universal Health Coverage," brought together national and county officials to align priorities across Kenya's devolved health system. Key issues discussed included health financing, human resources for health, primary healthcare strengthening and implementation of Taifa Care.

WHO represented Development Partners in Health Kenya at the forum, reaffirming the collective commitment to transparent financing and predictable funding flows to deliver quality healthcare for every Kenyan.



Thank you!

FROM THE WHO KENYA COUNTRY OFFICE TEAM

Our Kenya office is staffed by a diverse team committed to operational excellence, effective policy development and more. Through diligent work across various health fields, our team strives to improve health for all across Kenya.

WHO Kenya warmly welcomed WHO African Region Director Dr Mohamed Janabi and a high-level delegation from the WHO Regional Office for Africa.



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Acknowledgements

External Partners

Your support and partnership are crucial to our mission in Kenya, enabling us to save lives and serve the vulnerable. We thank you for empowering our technical staff to deepen government support, accelerate progress towards Sustainable Development Goals and enable us to plan for longer term approaches to health systems strengthening.

We thank our partners, including our thematic funders. The funds our partners provide give a degree of flexibility that allows WHO to be more effective and efficient in allocating funds for our joint priorities. Your ongoing commitment not only drives our success but also inspires a ripple effect of health improvements across Kenya. **Thank you!**





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