



**AFRICA HEALTH  
BUDGET NETWORK**

**ABUJA, NIGERIA;  
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# **PRESS STATEMENT**

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## **2026 WORLD IMMUNIZATION WEEK; AHBN CALLS TO 55 AFRICAN HEADS OF STATES FOR SWIFT ACTION.**

Between 2019 and 2021, 67 million children globally missed vaccinations, with 12.7 million in Africa. In 2021 alone, 12.7 million children in Africa were under-immunized, including 8.7 million zero-dose children. Half of the top 20 zero-dose countries are in Africa, with Nigeria (2.2 million) and Ethiopia (1.1million) accounting for two in five zero-dose children on the continent.

The Africa Health Budget Network (AHBN) calls on the 55 African Heads of State, policymakers, and regional stakeholders to urgently translate commitments into sustained action to improve the health and wellbeing of Women, Children and Adolescents across the continent. Under the 2026 theme, “For Every Generation, Vaccines Work,” AHBN underscores the critical role of immunization as a life-course intervention and a cornerstone of resilient, equitable health systems.

Aligned with commitments of the African Union on immunization priorities and the vision of the Immunization Agenda 2030—which seeks to ensure that everyone, everywhere, at every age benefit from vaccines—AHBN urges leaders to take the following actions:

### **1. Strengthen Domestic Financing and Political Commitment for Immunization and Vaccine Procurement**

African governments must increase sustainable domestic financing for immunization as a core component of primary health care and universal health coverage. In a continent where immunization coverage remains low across many countries, there is an urgent need for African leaders to prioritize and invest more resources in immunization.



Recent calls by the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention highlight that 30–40% of health expenditure in many African countries is still borne by households, underscoring the urgent need for financing reforms that protect families and expand access to essential services.

Governments must:

- Increase annual budget allocations to health and immunization
- Earmark tax revenues for health and establish dedicated immunization trust funds, in line with the Lusaka Agenda, which promotes sustainable financing
  - Align with global and regional priorities, including Domestic Resource Mobilization (DRM) goals supported by platforms such as the Global Learning Network
  - Improve health financing efficiency, including digital systems and accountability mechanisms to reduce leakages and redirect resources toward frontline service delivery

## **2. Prioritize Equity and Reach Zero-Dose Populations, Including Children in Missed Communities**

According to the UNICEF State of the World's Children 2023 report and the Gavi 6.0

Strategy, immunization gaps remain severe. In 2021 alone, 12.7 million children in Africa were under-immunized, including 8.7 million zero-dose children. Half of the top 20 zero-dose countries are in Africa, with Nigeria and Ethiopia accounting for a significant proportion.

African leaders must take targeted, equity-driven action to reach zero-dose and under-immunized children, especially in fragile, conflict-affected, and underserved settings. Closing these gaps is critical to health security and ensuring no one is left behind.

## **3. Accelerate Implementation of [Immunization Agenda 2030](#) and Local Manufacturing**

Countries should domesticate and operationalize the Immunization Agenda 2030 by

Integrating immunization into primary health care systems and strengthening data systems, surveillance, and accountability mechanisms.



African leaders should also strengthen and leverage continental and regional mechanisms such as the African Vaccine Manufacturing Accelerator, African Union Development Agency, African Medicines Agency, African Export-Import Bank, and African Development Bank to expand access, mobilize financing, and support the scale up vaccine manufacturing capacity in Africa, including financing, market shaping, and procurement mechanisms to strengthen local production and ensure sustainable access to vaccines across the continent.

In addition, AHBN echoes Africa CDC's call to accelerate local vaccine and pharmaceutical production, including the ambition to produce [60% of vaccines locally by 2040](#), as a pathway to health security, affordability, and timely access.

#### **4. Strengthen Accountability and Data-Driven Decision Making**

In line with the [Lusaka Agenda](#) which emphasises accountability, governments and regional bodies must institutionalize robust accountability frameworks to ensure transparency in resource allocation and utilization.

Evidence shows that inefficiencies—such as leakages in public systems—can undermine health outcomes, reinforcing the need for strong governance and data-driven decision-making.

#### **5. Promote Multi-sectoral and Inclusive Partnerships for Immunization**

In line with the [Lusaka Agenda](#), AHBN calls for strengthened multisectoral and multistakeholder collaboration.



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This includes the meaningful inclusion of civil society, youth-led organizations, and communities in policy processes. Such partnerships are essential for building trust, increasing demand for immunization, and countering misinformation.

As Africa continues to face evolving health challenges—including outbreaks, climate-related risks, and inequities—health financing reforms, local manufacturing, and strong immunization systems are central to building resilient health systems and advancing the continent’s health sovereignty agenda.

AHBN reaffirms its commitment to working with governments, regional institutions, and partners to advance accountability, strengthen health systems, and ensure that every woman, child, and adolescent in Africa has access to quality, equitable, and life-saving health services.

*Signed*

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