

# SUSTAINABLE IMMUNIZATION FINANCING

## Summary Digest

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## SIF Sabin Team Convenes in Johannesburg, South Africa for Rotavirus Conference and SIF Side Meeting

On 2-3 August 2010, the 9<sup>th</sup> International Rotavirus Symposium was held in Johannesburg, South Africa. More than 350 participants from 65 countries came to share the latest scientific knowledge on rotavirus and rotavirus vaccines. Latin American, Asian, and African researchers presented their work. In the past decade approximately 5 million children have died from diarrhea caused by rotavirus. Two pharmaceutical companies, Merck and Glaxo-Smith-Kline (GSK), are now producing rotavirus vaccines, both of which have been shown to reduce rotavirus severity and mortality. As the two vaccines come into routine use, they will prevent an estimated 1.6 million deaths between now and 2020. But this will only happen if countries and donors pledge to increase their financial support. The conference closed with a **Call to Action** in which participants pledged to advocate introducing the vaccines in their respective countries.



The SIF Team poses for a group photo. From Left to Right, back row : SIF Senior Program Officer (SPO), Jonas Mbwangue, SIF Program Director, Mike McQuestion, SPO Devendra Gnawali, SPO Cliff Kamara. From Left to Right, front row : SPO, Helene Mambu-Ma-Disu, PO Sandra Keller, SPO Diana Kizza.



The SIF Team gathers for a round table discussion about The SIF Program at the Protea Hotel with Sabin Vaccine Institute's Executive Vice-President, Ciro de Quadros in Midrand, South Africa.

In conjunction with the Rotavirus Symposium the Sabin SIF team- Devendra Gnawali, Clifford Kamara, Diana Kizza, Jonas Mbwangue, Helene Mambu-Ma-Disu, Mike McQuestion, Sandra Keller and Sabin Executive Vice-President Ciro de Quadros- met for the second time this year. The team assessed the fifteen pilot countries' progress to date and discussed emergent advocacy strategies. Two key strategies: incorporating immunization financing into ongoing decentralization programs and forming national immunization trust funds. Program Officer Sandra Keller briefed the team on the Program's burgeoning social media front, highlighting its newly-launched blog and Facebook, Flickr, Twitter, and YouTube accounts. The SIF team also agreed to synergize with other Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation-funded immunization programs. "Each addresses a distinct part of the problem. We will reach the goal sooner by working together", said SIF Director Mike McQuestion.



## DRC/Cameroon Peer Exchange Advances National Immunization Trust Funds

On 12 September, 2010, five Sabin-sponsored peer exchangers from the Democratic Republic of Congo landed in Yaoundé, Cameroon for four days of meetings and dialogue focused on developing national immunization trust funds. Both SIF pilot countries are searching for new ways to secure and allocate monies to ensure sustainable national immunization programs. The DRC and Cameroon share a similar background. Both countries have ambitious decentralization programs and the potential for tapping sub-national revenues to finance immunization and other basic health programs. Cameroon began developing the concept of a national trust fund in a Sabin-sponsored workshop of parliamentarians, governors, mayors and government officials which took place in Yaoundé last April. In DRC, two of the country's eleven provinces began co-financing routine immunization activities earlier this year. Overseeing the peer exchange were SIF Senior Program Officers Jonas Mbwangue and Helene Mambu-Ma-Disu. Assisting them was Dr Anya Blanche of the WHO/Cameroon office. The DRC team included two parliamentarians, Hons. Hubert Masala and Gregoire Kakule Lusengue. Representing the Ministry of Budget was Mr. Jules Baganda Kanki, and representing the Ministry of Finance was Mr. Andre Bona Kabamba. Dr. Raymond Cambele, DRC's national EPI Program Manager, completed the team. Their Cameroonian peers were Coastal Deputy Hon. Gaston Komba, and Southern Deputy Hon. Amougou Mezang. Representing the Association of Mayors was Professor Lazare Kaptue. The Ministry of Finance representative was Mr. Cyrille Effa and the Ministry of Economic and Planning representative was Dr. Gwen Ngangue. Mr Protais Bessala and Mr Pierre Dikamba represented the Ministry of Health. After a briefing by Dr. Marie Kobela, Cameroon EPI Program Manager, the teams met with the Cameroonian Minister of Health, Dr. Mama Fouada. As well as Mr. Victor Yene Essomba, General Secretary of the Parliament, and Mr. Paul Tassong, General Secretary of the Ministry of Economy and Planning. All were supportive of the proposed national immunization trust fund.

In an ensuing two-day workshop, participants shared their insights on how the EPI programs are financed and managed. Dr. Raymond Cambele gave an EPI manager's perspective, highlighting the challenges DRC faces in trying to lessen donor dependency and sustainably finance its program. Cash rationing is a problem in DRC. In recent years the Treasury has not fully disbursed approved health budgets. Financial management systems are weak, a reflection of DRC's high donor dependence. A national immunization trust fund, with supporting legislation, would help build financial management capacity. In Cameroon, the government's routine EPI budget has been static despite a growing number of vaccine-eligible children born each year. This year, the President ordered the government to implement a "big bang" style decentralization program. Immunization is seen as a convenient starting point for health sector decentralization. The *maires*, who represent the country's regions and large municipalities, proposed forming sub-national immunization budgets. A national immunization trust fund would provide a mechanism for revenue sharing while providing a conduit for private sector contributions to immunization. The teams worked together to create a logical framework for the funds. They consulted with a range of high-level Cameroonian officials, including the General Secretary of Parliament, the Director of Health Budget at the Ministry of Finance, and the General Secretary of the Ministry of Economy and Planning.

The teams drafted the **Yaoundé Call for Action**, a list of seven recommendations outlining the necessary steps needed to ensure the establishment of such a fund. It was signed by representatives of both delegations and then sent to Cameroonian officials in the MoH, MoF and Parliament for review. The teams will present their findings at the WHO/AFRO Annual Regional Conference on Immunization in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso on 6-9 December 2010.

## West African Peer Exchangers Study Uganda's Performance-Based Budget Systems

Sabin's Sustainable Immunization Financing Program is working very closely with the Ministries of Finance in Liberia and Sierra Leone. The neighboring countries share similar histories, including protracted civil wars during much of the 1990s that left both devastated. In the past few years, both economies have been growing. Free elections were held and key national institutions are again functioning. Senior Program Officer Clifford Kamara noted that his counterparts in both finance ministries are keenly interested to develop performance-based budgeting methods. In this approach, finance monitors not just expenditures but also programmatic outputs and impacts from each sector. For health, immunization is a good place to start. Linking performance to expenditures could speed up the transition to sustainable immunization financing.

Another SIF country, Uganda, has already implemented performance-based budgeting. Clifford and Uganda-based SIF Senior Program Officer Diana Kizza proposed the exchange and the Ugandan Ministry of Finance agreed to host the visitors. Representing Liberia was Bernard Jappah, Public Financial Management Reform Coordinator. Representing Sierra Leone was Peter Sam-Kpakra, Deputy Financial Secretary in charge of Donor Programs. The exchange took place on 1-5 August 2010. Though their main objective was learning how Uganda formalizes the performance monitoring approach, the peers picked up other tips as well. In his report, Sam-Kpakra mentioned that he saw how performance contracts are used with Ugandan health providers. The experience itself was pleasant. "My colleagues were receptive and made our stay very comfortable," commented Sam-Kpakra. "I was met at the airport by one of my colleagues and a special lunch was organized for us. The program was well organized." Jappah and Sam-Kpakra will present their experience at the WHO/AFRO Annual Regional Conference on Immunization in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso on 6-9 December 2010.



## SIF Immunization Champion: Dr. Risintha Premaratne



SIF Immunization  
Champion,

**Dr. Risintha  
Premaratne**

In this Summary Digest, we spotlight Dr. Risintha Premaratne - this quarter's sustainable immunization financing champion. A Consultant Epidemiologist in the Epidemiology Unit of the Ministry of Health for Sri Lanka, Dr. Premaratne has led the Sri Lankan EPI Program to ever higher performance levels in the last two years. He and his team hosted a recent Sabin-sponsored sub-

regional parliamentary briefing which brought parliamentary and government peers from Nepal and Cambodia to Colombo. Already close to the sustainably financed program goal, Sri Lanka's EPI Program has developed best practices in many areas including program-based budgeting and financial management systems.

Dr. Risintha Premaratne holds an MD, M.Sc., MBBs and is Board Certified as a Specialist in Community Medicine in Sri Lanka. He resides in Colombo.

## SIF Sabin News Highlights

- SIF Sabin is active on the web via its fairly new and various social networking and information sites. To learn more about SIF's activities, please visit :

SIF Blog at: <http://sifsabin.wordpress.com/>.

Flickr: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/sifsabin>

Twitter: [http://twitter.com/SIF\\_Sabin](http://twitter.com/SIF_Sabin)

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/SIF-Sabin>

And YouTube channel:

<http://www.youtube.com/SabinSIF>

- Senior Program Officer, Dr. Helene Mambu-ma-Disu will make her second visit to SIF pilot country Madagascar from October 14-16. There she will meet with their Minister of Health as well as Madagascar's EPI Manager, Dr. Marius Rakotomanga, to discuss sustainable immunization financing initiatives for the country.

- On October 21-22, 2010, Director Mike McQuestion and Senior Program Officer Devendra Gnawali will join SIF counterparts from Sri Lanka, Cambodia and Nepal. as participants in the "Third Sub-regional Symposium for Parliamentarians on Sustainable Immunization Financing" in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

- Director Mike McQuestion and Senior Program Officer, Cliff Kamara will be in Abuja, Nigeria on October 29th, for Nigeria's First Parliamentary Briefing on Sustainable Immunization Financing.

## Sustainable Immunization Financing Program Activity and Outputs This Period

Milestone/Activity (1.VII.10 - 31.IX.10)	Achieved this quarter	Cumulative (1.IX.09 – 30.IX.10)	Details:
Visit to field countries	6	32	Liberia, Senegal (2), Mali, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Kenya
National Parliamentary briefing	7	29	Cambodia, Nepal, Cameroon (4), Kenya
Sub-regional Parliamentary briefing	1	9	Sri Lanka
International Partners Meetings	3	19	SIF Jo'burg Meeting; Rotavirus; GAVI Co-financing review
Advocacy activities inserted into cMYP	3	8	Cameroon, DR Congo (new province), Nepal
Peer exchanges involving SIF target countries	5	19	Liberia, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Cameroon, DR Congo
National routine EPI budget increased	2	6	DRC (new province), Cambodia

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