

SUSTAINABLE IMMUNIZATION FINANCING

Summary Digest

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Cameroon Decentralization Leading to Immunization Financing Plan



From Left to Right : SIF Senior Program Officer, Jonas Mbwangue and SIF Program Director, Mike McQuestion join Cameroon Deputy EPI Manager and Director of Routing Vaccine, Dr. Jean Thomas Bikoy, and EPI Manager Dr. Marie Kobela at the country's first meeting of *maires* to discuss immunization financing.

On 29 to 30 April 2010, a group of parliamentarians and provincial governors (*maires*) met to discuss immunization financing in Yaounde, Cameroon. They were joined by officials from the Ministries of Health, Finance and Decentralization as well as a visiting delegation from Mali. Sabin Senior Program Officer Jonas Mbwangue and Cameroon's EPI Program team organized the event. It was the third in a series of Sabin-supported briefings in Cameroon. Motivating the workshop was a recent executive order from His Excellency President Paul Biya to implement the country's decentralization programme. The order took effect on 1 January 2010. According to the 2010 Finance Law, each of the country's ten provinces must henceforth form its own budget. The governors wanted to learn more about immunization and how the program is financed.

It was the first time central government officials, parliamentarians and governors had held such a meeting. "We wanted the EPI team to brief the governors directly", commented Mbwangue, who represents the SIF Program in Senegal, Mali and his native Cameroon. "And the parliamentarians wanted to hear from the *maires*", continued

Mbwangue. Cameroon now allocates a disproportionate 23% of its federal health budget to immunization. The provinces capture significant revenues from mining, forestry and other sectors. If the *maires* agree to direct some of those revenues toward immunization, Cameroon's federal health budget could be reallocated and the EPI Program would be more sustainably financed. Following briefings from national EPI Manager Dr. KOBELA Marie and WHO Immunization Focal Point Dr. ANYA Blanche, the governors decided to do just that. Immunization line items will be inserted in their new regional health budgets.

Concerned with donor dependency, the governors further recommended forming a national immunization fund, to be financed jointly by the federal government and the ten provincial governments. Such a revenue sharing arrangement would add predictability and transparency while multiplying the number of immunization stakeholders nationwide. The Ministry of Health will relay this recommendation to the Prime Minister. A task force is now preparing a draft law instituting the fund. If the Council of Ministers agrees, the proposed law will be submitted later this year to parliament for its approval.

Decentralization in Mali

At the Yaounde workshop, the Malian delegation shared that country's decentralization experience. Mali began its decentralization in earnest in 2000. The Malian approach emphasizes hands on social involvement. In each of Mali's health centers (*centres sanitaires*), an annual performance contract is signed between the health workers and the *communes* they serve. The contract is based on a workplan elaborated by the health workers and community leaders. It covers five essential programs including immunization. Financing is through transfers from the federal government and local user fees. Periodic progress reports are given, allowing the public to track progress of key programmatic indicators such as numbers of children fully immunized. Expenditures are monitored and reported as well. These data, which are analyzed quarterly at district and national levels, compare favorably to sample survey results. So far, performance is measured using purely programmatic indicators. It would be an easy step to derive efficiency estimates for the various programs, noted the Mali EPI Deputy Manager Dr. Zankoura Coulibali, particularly at the health center level.



SIF Sabin and WHO Sponsor Second Parliamentary Briefing on Sustainable Immunization Financing in DRC



A scene from the Second Democratic Republic of Congo Parliamentary Briefing, jointly sponsored by the WHO and Sabin Vaccine Institute (SIF)

On June 16, 2010, The Sabin Vaccine Institute and the World Health Organization (WHO) co-sponsored the second DRC parliamentarians' meeting on sustainable health and immunization financing in Kinshasa. Or-

ganized by the DRC Ministry of Health, the session opened with remarks from the Honorable Evariste Boshab, Speaker of the National Assembly. Also present, were: Dr Victor Makwenge, Minister of Public Health; Mr. Richard Muyej Mangez, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs; Dr Mathieu Kamwa, country WHO representative; Pierrette Vu Thi, Unicef Representative; Dr Pierre Lokadi, Permanent Secretary of Health; and Sabin's SIF Senior Program Officer, Dr Helene Mambu-Ma-Disu.

Among the 60 participants were 15 Members of DRC Parliament (including the Vice-chair of the Economy and Finance Committee) were present, as were representatives and members of the Provincial Assemblies, Ministries of Health, Ministries of Finance, Budget, Planning and Health. Also present were representatives from Parliamentary Affairs, including representatives from UNICEF, WHO, USAID, World Bank, JICA, and the Rotary Club.

The main focus of this second parliamentary briefing was to follow up on recommendations formulated in the country's first parliamentary briefing, which was held on 23 September of 2009. It was the first time representatives from varying national institutions met in one room to discuss the constitutional role of the decentralized entities in the health financing. Representing the Parliament's Social Affairs Committee, Honorable Lusenge informed participants of recent lobbying activity carried out by the Committee in an effort to secure a series of budget line items for immunization.

In his opening statement, the Speaker of the National Assembly announced, that his "...presence in this room [was] a firm commitment of the National Representation to see that the budget allocated to health leaves the category of the poor parent in order to meet the MDGs". He exhorted participants to "...dig in all directions possible to make health a priority for all".

The First Vice-Chairman of the Economy and Finance Com-

mittee, Honorable Hubert Masala, shared with his peers how the first SIF Sabin-sponsored briefing had sensitized him and his committee members to the need for sustainable immunization financing. Immediately following that briefing, he and members of his committee worked hard to secure funds for the immunization line items. In addition, they revisited the present budget cycle, asking EPI to produce a results-based budget project. Mr. Jules Baganda from the Ministry of Budget explained to attendees the steps needed to secure budget-allocated resources. Moving on to the subject of decentralization, The Minister of Health of the Kasai-Oriental (Eastern Kasai) Province, Dr Roland SHODU K. LOMAMY, explained that, properly executed, decentralization would enable provinces to finance their health responsibilities as stipulated in article 203 of their DRC constitution.

In addition to the stated objectives, the meeting provided an opportunity for much needed, frank, and unprecedented discussions between various health and immunization stakeholders, many of whom had never had the opportunity to hear such diverse perspectives on the issue before. Participants heard various presentations from experts from the national EPI, WHO, UNICEF as well as from Sabin Vaccine Institute. The presentations addressed immunization as well as broader health sector issues. A highlight was the WHO presentation which compared the DRC EPI Program's performance to that of its neighboring countries. In this review, the EPI and health ministry officials stated the need for a more proactive and engaged dialog with the Ministry of Budget. This would enable the expeditious disbursement of previously allocated funds. The participants broke new ground in recommending the establishment of a National Immunization Financing Fund. The goal of such a fund would be to secure long-term funding for immunization. It could later be extended to cover the other essential PHC programs. Parliamentarians responded positively to this recommendation by announcing their commitment to advocate the National Immunization Financing Fund when the proposal reaches parliament.

The event drew interest of the media, resulting in nationwide television and radio coverage. The proposed DRC National Immunization Fund is expected to be presented to parliament later this year.



Participants of the second Sabin-sponsored parliamentarians' briefing included: National Assembly Speaker Hon. Evariste Boshab (fourth from the right, front row), the Minister of Health on his left, and the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs (sixth from right, front row)



Parliamentary Declarations Play Important Role

In a Sabin immunization financing workshop last August, parliamentarians from Mali, Senegal and Cameroon drafted and signed a declaration in support of sustainable immunization financing. In February 2010, an analogous declaration was adopted by parliamentarians from Nepal, Cambodia and Sri Lanka. The Dakar Declaration and [Kathmandu Declaration](#), respectively, represent first steps in the legislative process. International parliamentary exchanges often produce such declarations or resolutions. By convention, MPs who participate in such exchanges subsequently introduce the documents to their respective home parliaments. Once on record, the documents can then be used to introduce legislation leading, in this case, to laws assuring sustainable financing for immunization.

Program Officers Link Reform Agendas in the Search for Sustainable Immunization Financing

Merging existing reform agendas, early results suggest, is one way countries can achieve sustainable immunization financing. This is becoming increasingly clear as the five SIF Program Officers and their national counterparts carry out peer exchanges, parliamentary briefings and subnational workshops in the SIF Program pilot countries. In the process, existing agendas are being revived, disseminated and linked. One example is democratization. In a remarkable series of three subregional briefings organized by Program Officer Devendra Gnawali, newly elected parliamentarians from Cambodia, Sri Lanka and Nepal have been exchanging experiences and learning how they can better oversee their health budgets.

This parliamentary capacity-building work will advance further when MPs from all fifteen SIF pilot countries come together in late 2010 for the first Sabin Parliamentary Colloquium on Sustainable Immunization Financing.

A second agenda is budget reform. In Uganda, Program Officer Diana Kizza is working with her Ministry of

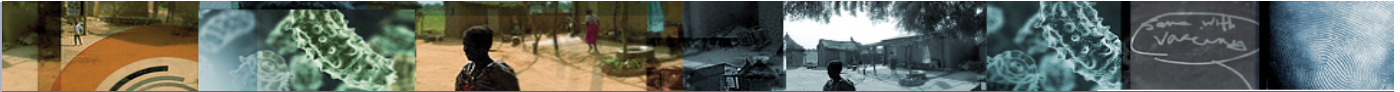
Health counterparts to develop a quarterly budgetary monitoring system for the national immunization program. The ministry will use this information to buttress its sector-level quarterly budget performance reports to the ministry of finance and parliament. In Sierra Leone, Program Officer Clifford Kamara and his government counterparts are organizing a series of subnational workshops where local health officials are considering ways to monitor and report regional health budget performance.

A third agenda is decentralization. As described in this issue, Program Officer Jonas Mbwangue recently brought together Cameroon's ten elected *maires*, members of the parliamentary health committee and government officials from health, finance and decentralization ministries. A similar effort is underway in DR Congo where Program Officer Helene Mambu-Ma-Disu is working directly with parliamentarians and governors in four of the country's ten provinces. Immunization financing, it seems, is an effective catalyst for advancing these agendas and for bringing in new immunization stakeholders across sectors and levels of governance. In the process, new counterparts are learning from each other and inducing needed innovations in key national institutions.

Sabin's Executive VP attends SIF/Rotary event in Kathmandu



On June 15, 2010, Sabin's Executive Vice President, [Ciro de Quadros](#) joined Program Officer, [Devendra Gnawali](#) in Kathmandu Nepal for an SIF/Rotary-sponsored event: "Countdown to 2015 and Sustainable Immunization Financing: Role of Civil Society Organization." UNICEF Nepal also contributed in making this event a huge success. "The initiative of...Nepal," commented de Quadros, "emphasizes the importance of sustainability of the national immunization program. It is an excellent example of community participation and public-private partnership. It underlines the "plus" in Rotary's PolioPlus Program. It will certainly serve as a model for other communities around the world." To learn more about the event via Nepal's *The Rising Nepal* publication, please read: "[Vaccine Most Effective to Prevent Polio, Measles.](#)"



SIF Sabin News Highlights

- SIF Sabin is expanding its reach on the web. Often, SIF's *Summary Digest* does not give sufficient room for informing its readers of all its activities. In early May, SIF Sabin joined the Blogosphere. Please visit our site to learn more about our program, and the officers who drive it, at: <http://sifsabin.wordpress.com/>. We invite you to comment on our bi-weekly stories.
- Still want to learn more and see photos documenting SIF Sabin events? Then flip through the virtual album pages of our photo albums on our 'Flickr' site: a visual archive of SIF Sabin events recent and past from almost all of our 15 countries since our program's inception three years ago. <http://www.flickr.com/photos/sifsabin>
- A fan of Twitter updates and feeds? Learn about SIF's daily activities in 140 characters or less, at http://twitter.com/SIF_Sabin
- Last but not least, SIF Sabin has also launched its new YouTube channel, which will feature occasional video streaming of SIF Sabin events. To see a televised interview with Program Director Mike McQuestion and Senior Program Officer Cliff Kamara discussing SIF in Sierra Leone and in greater Africa, please visit: <http://www.youtube.com/SabinSIF>

SIF Immunization Champion: Mr. Visal Uy



SIF Immunization Champion, Mr. Visal Uy

In this issue, we would like to acknowledge the work of Mr. Visal Uy, Cambodian Director of International Relations Division of the National Assembly, for his contributions to laying the groundwork for a sustainably financed immunization program in his country.

Mr. Uy first learned about immunization financing as a peer exchanger attending the "First Sub-regional Symposium for Parliamentarians on Child Health and Sustainable Immunization Financing" in Kathmandu, Nepal, on 9-11 February 2010. There Mr. Uy and

other members of the Cambodian delegation met counterparts from WHO, UNICEF and parliaments of Sri Lanka and Nepal. Energized by the process, participation and recommendations which produced the 'Kathmandu Declaration', Mr. Uy and Cambodian MPs Lork Kheng and H.E. Peou Savoeun, returned to Cambodia, Kathmandu Declaration in hand. Their first order of action was to disseminate the Declaration, urging that Cambodian parliamentarians take the same initiative. Mr. Visal was instrumental in bringing together parliamentarians, senators, officials from the Ministries of Health, Economy & Finance, civil society organizations, members of the private sector as well as delegates from Nepal and Sri Lanka to the dissemination workshop to discuss maternal, child health and sustainable immunization financing in Cambodia.

As a peer exchanger, Mr. Visal saw firsthand the power of collective action. He and the Cambodian MPs plan to introduce the Kathmandu Declaration to the newly formed ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly, which will meet in Phnom Penh in 2011.

Sustainable Immunization Financing Program Activity and Outputs This Period

| Milestone/Activity (4.1.10 – 7.1.10) | Goal | Achieved to date | Details: |
|--|------|------------------|---|
| Visits to SIF target countries by SIF Senior Program Officers (excluding resident countries Cameroon, DR Congo, Nepal, Sierra Leone, Uganda) | 20 | 29 | Cambodia (1), Sri Lanka (1), Kenya (1), Mali (1), Senegal (1), Rwanda (1) |
| National Parliamentary Briefings | 12 | 20 | Nepal (1), Cambodia (1), Mali (1), DRC (1) |
| Sub-regional Parliamentary Briefings | 9 | 8 | Sri Lanka (1) Cameroon (1) |
| International Partner Meetings | 7 | 17 | • World Bank/GAVI (London, 5/10); • GAVI (London, 3/10 & 5/10; Geneva 6/10) • WHO/UNICEF (Yaounde, 6/10; Kigali 4/10) |
| Advocacy activities inserted into cMYPs | 8 | 5 | Sierra Leone, Uganda, Mali, Senegal, DR Congo |
| Peer exchanges involving SIF target countries | 8 | 14 | *(See sabin.org/sif for list of peer exchange countries) |
| National routine EPI budget increased | 15 | 4 | Sierra Leone, Senegal, DR Congo, Nepal |

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