

SUSTAINABLE IMMUNIZATION FINANCING

Summary Digest

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Third Asian Sub-regional Parliamentary Briefing on Sustainable Immunization Financing

On 21-22 October, 2010, the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia, in collaboration with the Sabin Vaccine Institute, organized the “Third Sub-regional Symposium for Parliamentarians on Sustainable Immunization Financing”. The meeting took place in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The third in a series that included Kathmandu (9-11 February 2010) and Colombo (15-16 July 2010), the Phnom Penh symposium again brought together three national key institutions (Parliament, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Finance) to share innovative approaches to sustainable immunization financing. The eighty-seven participants included parliamentarians, parliamentary staff, government officials from the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Finance of Cambodia, Nepal and Sri Lanka, resource persons from the World Bank, UNDP and UNICEF and members of the press.

The symposium began with a series of scientific sessions. A subsequent session focused on the work of parliamentarians in the health sphere. **Hon. Mr. Chhem Sakhan**, Chairperson, Commission on Public Health, Social Work, Veteran Youth, Rehabilitation, Labor, Vocational Training and Women's Affairs (Senate), Cambodia, highlighted the roles MPs can play in achieving the health MDGs. Cambodia is one of the few countries on track to achieve its health MDGs #4 and #5. Hon. Sakhan called on the MPs to advocate for increased government budgets for EPI and other MCH programs.

Hon. Ms. Babina Moktan Tamang, MP from Nepal, described the various activities being carried out by the National Assembly's Health, Women & Social Affairs Committee in support of the MDGs and for health financing in her country. Her Committee has supported effective maternal health interventions and has requested that the government study the feasibility of a national immunization trust fund. Parliamentarians are working on supporting legislation (National Immunization Act) which will treat all aspects of immunization in Nepal. The MPs are aware and proud of the fact that Nepal is also on track to achieve MDGs #4 and #5.



Cambodian delegates at the “Third Sub-regional Symposium for Parliamentarians on Sustainable Immunization Financing” reviewing their SIF action plan. Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 21-22 October, 2010

Next, Sri Lanka's **Dr. Ramesh Pathirana** described the country's rapid health transition. Infectious diseases are rapidly receding. Political commitment to health is consistently high, he noted, but there is little financial accountability. In the coming months, the Sri Lankan parliamentarians will work to strengthen existing health legislation. They will use their oversight powers to induce greater coordination between central and provincial-level health authorities. And they will insist on the development of routine resource tracking and reporting for key health programs.

In the final session, the countries elaborated lists of short-term actions they will take to move them closer to the sustainable immunization financing goal.

Sri Lanka will address six key action points:

- Advocate for an increase in the routine EPI budget from Rs900m (2010) to Rs1.5b in 2011.
- Form a new inter-institutional ad hoc committee for immunization financing with representation from ministries of health and finance, parliament, customs and procurement agencies.
- Push immunization coverage from 95% to 100%, using innovative action research strategies (school, village surveys, a census of unreached children);
- Institute a second oversight committee between parliament and ministry of finance to monitor EPI



National Immunization Trust Funds II—an Emerging Concept for Sustainable Immunization Financing

In our last issue we described a new SIF Program phenomenon: the emergence of national immunization trust funds. Below we share some more observations on this theme.

Trust funds are funds destined for a particular beneficiary but managed by others—usually a board of trustees. The beneficiary does not directly access the fund. A trust fund is legally incorporated according to the civil law of the host country. Three legal concepts must be clearly established. The first is *intention*: The reason(s) the trust is being created. The second is *subject matter*: Exactly what assets the trust will contain. Third are the *objects*: The beneficiaries must be clearly defined. For the immunization case, the intention might be to make the routine EPI program donor-independent. The subject matter will include cash revenues and possibly non-government securities. The beneficiary will be the national EPI program.

Federal taxes may be levied (eg, on airplane tickets, alcohol, tobacco) to ensure a sustainable flow of public financing into the fund. For example, the Democratic Republic of Congo is considering a tax on private phone calls to capitalize its immunization trust fund. Donors have various motives to give to the fund. Subnational governments can send local revenues to the fund where they will be matched by federal revenue contributions. Private donors can demonstrate corporate social responsibility by essentially joining a public-private partnership. Firms and wealthy individuals will receive tax credits or tax breaks as an inducement to contribute. Donors will contribute with the expectation that the use of the funds will be meticulously documented and reported periodically. The fund thus makes collective action for sustainable immunization financing more likely to succeed.

Trust funds are not new to the public health scene. In the developed world, national and multilateral health-related trust funds are common. In [Bhutan](#) an externally funded trust fund finances most of the country's public health programs. The immunization trust funds are innovative in that they will be entirely capitalized and managed by the host countries.

SIF pilot countries currently developing national immunization trust funds include Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Nepal, Mali, Senegal, Kenya and Sri Lanka. Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of Congo presented their trust fund projects at the WHO/AFRO African Regional Conference on Immunization, in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso on 6-9 December 2010.

First Parliamentary Colloquium: Fostering Exchange of Ideas and Best Practices on the way to Sustainable Immunization Financing

The First Parliamentary Colloquium on Sustainable Immunization Financing, co-sponsored by the Sabin Vaccine Institute and the Parliament and Government of Ethiopia, will be held in March of 2011 in Addis Ababa. Delegations from all fifteen SIF pilot countries will represent three key institutions: Parliament, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Finance. The delegates, along with WHO, UNICEF, World Bank, GAVI and other counterparts will address programmatic, financial, policy and legislative aspects of immunization financing, focusing on actual experiences and best practices.

Each country must find its own route to sustainable immunization financing. The introduction of newer vaccines is helping countries achieve their 2015 Millennium Development Goal #4 (reduce child mortality by two-thirds). But adding these vaccines increases the cost per fully immunized child to around US\$30. So far external partners have met most of this cost. But donor funding is not assured beyond 2015. Countries must therefore develop new approaches to financing immunization sooner rather than later.

In peer review fashion, delegates will analyze immunization program performance in each of the SIF pilot countries. Attention will be focused on making the investment case and developing sustainable financing arrangements such as national immunization trust funds. Delegates will also hear about national immunization financing and legislation in Latin America, a region where nearly all national immunization programs are now sustainably financed. The Colloquium will include both plenary and small group sessions. This will be the first global health conference dedicated to sustainable immunization financing. For more on Sabin's First Parliamentary Colloquium on Sustainable Immunization Financing, click [here](#).

Sabin Hosts Nigeria's First Briefing on SIF in Abuja

On 29th October, 2010, Nigeria's first parliamentary briefing took place in Abuja; it was chaired by the Executive Director of the National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA), Dr. Muhammad Pate. The thirty-two participants included the Chairlady of the Senate Health Committee, Hon. Mrs. Dr. Iyabo Obasanjo-Bello; Dr. Ade Abanida and colleagues from the NPHCDA; a WHO delegation headed by WR Dr. Peter Eriki; a USAID delegation; and representatives from UNICEF and Rotary International. The Chairman of the Board of the NPHCDA, His Royal Highness, Dr. Yahyah, also participated. The event was fully covered by both print and electronic media.



Although Nigeria is the thirteenth of the fifteen program countries to hold a parliamentary briefing, it may well be the first to achieve the sustainable immunization financing goal, remarked SIF Director Mike McQuestion. Nigeria already funds over 70% of its routine vaccine costs — a rate higher than any other sub-Saharan African country. McQuestion emphasized the SIF Program's commitment to work closely with the NPHCDA and other stakeholders in achieving this goal.



SIF Sabin News Highlights

- At the request of the Ministry of Health, Senior Program Officer Diana Kizza led a review of immunization legislation in Uganda.
- During September 11-16, Senior Program Officers Helene Mambu-Ma-Disu and Jonas Mbwangue organized a peer exchange between Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Cameroon. The exchange focused on approaches to establishing national immunization trust funds in both SIF pilot countries.
- Following Kenya's first parliamentary briefing on September 8, 2010, members of the Health Committee drafted legislation to sustainably finance the country's national immunization program.
- From October 14-18, Senior Program Officer Helene Mambu-Ma-Disu made her second field visit to Madagascar. There, she met with both the Minister of Health and EPI Manager to discuss SIF initiatives.
- SIF Program Director Mike McQuestion and Senior Program Officers Clifford Kamara and Diana Kizza have been invited to serve on the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Decade of Vaccine delivery and costing thematic group. Led by WHO, UNICEF and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the group will develop recommendations and propose financing strategies for extending routine immunization to all subgroups.

SIF Immunization Champion



In this issue, we spotlight Dr. Fred Were as SIF Sabin's Immunization Champion.

Margaret Mead once said that "...only a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." A good example of such a committed citizen is Dr. Fred Were. A pediatrician, neonatologist and professor of medicine, Dr. Were also chairs the Kenya Pediatric Association. Dr. Were is committed to

elevating the public health of all Kenyans. Last September, he and pediatric colleague David Kithanga joined forces with SIF Senior Program Officer Diana Kizza to pull together Kenya's first national parliamentary briefing on sustainable immunization financing. The presentation was prepared by the ministry of health immunization team and delivered to the Parliamentary Health Committee by Kizza, Were and Kithanga. Observing the precarious financing situation, the MPs resolved to write legislation that will guarantee an adequate government budget for the routine immunization program.

Dr. Fred Were is no stranger to the Sabin Vaccine Institute. As a member of Sabin's Pneumococcal Awareness Council of Experts (PACE), he was instrumental in convincing Kenya to use pneumococcal vaccine. We are grateful for Dr. Were for his enduring support for childhood immunization in Kenya and elsewhere.

Sustainable Immunization Financing Program Activity and Outputs This Period

Milestone/Activity (1.VII.10 - 31.IX.10)	Achieved this quarter	Cumulative (1.IX.09-4.XII.10)	Details:
Visit to field countries	5	37	Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Rwanda, Madagascar, Nigeria
National Parliamentary briefing	5	34	Nepal, Cameroon (2), Nigeria
Sub-regional Parliamentary briefing	1	10	Cambodia
International Partners Meetings	8	27	'New Vaccines Meeting' (Kathmandu, 10/10) • GAVI (Kigali 10/10, 11/10) • GAVI 'Decade of New Vaccines' (Geneva, 11/10) • ARCI + ARICC WHO meeting (Ouagadougou, 12/10) • EPI Review Consultation Meeting (Kampala, 10/10), EPI Review Meeting (Kampala, 11/10)
Advocacy activities inserted into cMYP	1	9	Nepal
Peer exchanges involving SIF target countries	8	27	Nepalese and Sri Lankan PEs visited Cambodia; PEs from DRC, Cameroon, Sierra Leone attended ARCI + ARICC meetings, Ouagadougou.
National routine EPI budget increased	0	6	None added this quarter

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