

International Coordinating Group on Vaccine Provision for Yellow Fever

Report of the Annual Meeting

Geneva

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List of abbreviations

AFRO WHO Regional Office for Africa

EMRO WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean

EPI Expanded Programme for Immunization

GAVI Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance

ICG International Coordinating Group

MSF Médecins sans Frontières

PAHO Pan American Health Organization

RF Revolving Fund

SD Supply Division of UNICEF

UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund WASH Water, sanitation and hygiene

WHO World Health Organization

Executive summary

The International Coordinating Group (ICG) on Vaccine Provision for Yellow Fever held its annual meeting in Geneva from 11 to 12 May 2017. The goals of the meeting were for partners and stakeholders: to review relevant epidemic response activities since the last meeting in September 2016; to provide an update on the planned evaluation of the ICG; and to discuss anticipated stockpile needs for the coming year together with longer term plans. The meeting followed a two-day event on Eliminating Yellow fever Epidemics (EYE) strategy.

Participants included representatives from World Health Organization (WHO) headquarters (HQ), including the ICG Secretariat, the WHO Regional Office for Africa (AFRO), and the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean (EMRO), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), with participants from both HQ and the Supply Division (SD), Médecins sans Frontières (MSF), and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance (Gavi).

On the second day of the meeting, representatives of vaccine manufacturers presented plans for current and future vaccine production and supply.

1. Epidemiological update 2016–2017

1.1 AFRO

A yellow fever outbreak began in December 2015 in Angola and was declared ended 12 months later. A total of 884 cases were confirmed including 121 confirmed deaths. The ICG released a total of 20 031 900 vaccine doses. More than 20 million people were vaccinated, with estimated vaccine coverage of 95%.

A yellow fever outbreak was declared in the Democratic Republic of Congo in March 2016 and lasted until February 2017. Seventy-nine cases including 16 confirmed deaths were confirmed. WHO recommended a pre-emptive vaccination campaign for Kinshasa (35 health zones) and along the border areas (28 health zones) between Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The outbreak included Kinshasa, where 35 health zones were covered by vaccination. A total of 9 395 339 vaccine doses were approved, with 14 259 315 people were vaccinated (coverage rate of 97.5%). Significantly, 7.5 million people were vaccinated with a 1/5th fractional dose.¹

In Uganda, three districts were affected by outbreaks of yellow fever with seven confirmed cases and three deaths. A total of 776 249 doses of vaccine were approved and 627 706 people vaccinated (coverage rate of 94%). Rapid, targeted responses proved particularly effective in containing the outbreak.

Table 1. AFRO: Yellow fever outbreaks, 2016–2017

Country	Suspected/confirmed cases	Deaths (among confirmed cases)	Confirmed cases (%)	Comment
Angola Democratic	4188/884	121	13.7	80/166 districts (48%) with laboratory- confirmed cases 63 health zones
Republic of				covered
Congo	3256/79	16	21	
Uganda	65/ 7	3	42	Masaka, Rukungiri and Kalangala districts
Total	7509/970	140	14	30 898 324 people vaccinated 30 203 470 vaccines shipped

The meeting participants agreed that suspected cases should be excluded from the report if, following investigation, they were discarded or, through differential diagnosis, confirmed as negative. Suspected cases should be included only when they have not been classified. It was recommended that AFRO discuss with countries the possibility of removing this information when cases had been discarded.

1.2 PAHO

There has been a significant reduction in the number of yellow fever cases in countries that have implemented their routine immunization programme for yellow fever according to schedule. However, cases and outbreaks continue in unvaccinated populations. Shortages of vaccine could jeopardize progress through the accumulation of susceptible populations in risk areas and low vaccination coverage among children. Re-urbanization of yellow fever continues to be a threat in the region, as reflected in the outbreak in Brazil.

In Brazil, since the beginning of the outbreak in December 2016 up until 27 April 2017, 3131 cases of yellow fever were reported, of which 715 were confirmed, together with 240 confirmed deaths. The outbreak began in the southern state of Minas Gerais, and by early 2017 was spreading to coastal areas, including Rio de Janeiro, Espirito Santo and Bahia, none of which were previously considered to be at risk for yellow fever.

The response to the Brazilian outbreak is complicated by ecological, structural and political elements. In Brazil, *aedes aegypti* has not been reported as significant in transmission, while epizootics have been confirmed in both Espirito Santo and Bahia, and could potentially change the transmission cycle. By April 2017, 474 non-human primates epizootics had been confirmed as yellow fever.

The country's health system is based upon a decentralized primary health model, which devolves responsibilities, including the EPI, to more than 5600 local municipalities. State-level responsibilities are limited to regulation and provision of assistance. The ICG received an emergency vaccination request from the Government of Brazil before a formal declaration of the emerging nature of the outbreak was made.

An estimated 19 million doses will be required for people at risk together with a further 15 million for non-endemic areas.

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