Progress and Challenges with Sustaining and Advancing Immunization Coverage During the COVID-19 Pandemic

2020 WHO/UNICEF Estimates of National Immunization Coverage (WUENIC 2020)

Sources:

- Member State reports to WHO and UNICEF
- The 2021 World Bank Development Indicators Online
- United Nations, Population Division, 2019 revision

Estimates as of July 15 2021, includes data reported as of 6 July

https://www.who.int/data/immunization
http://www.data.unicef.org/child-health/immunization

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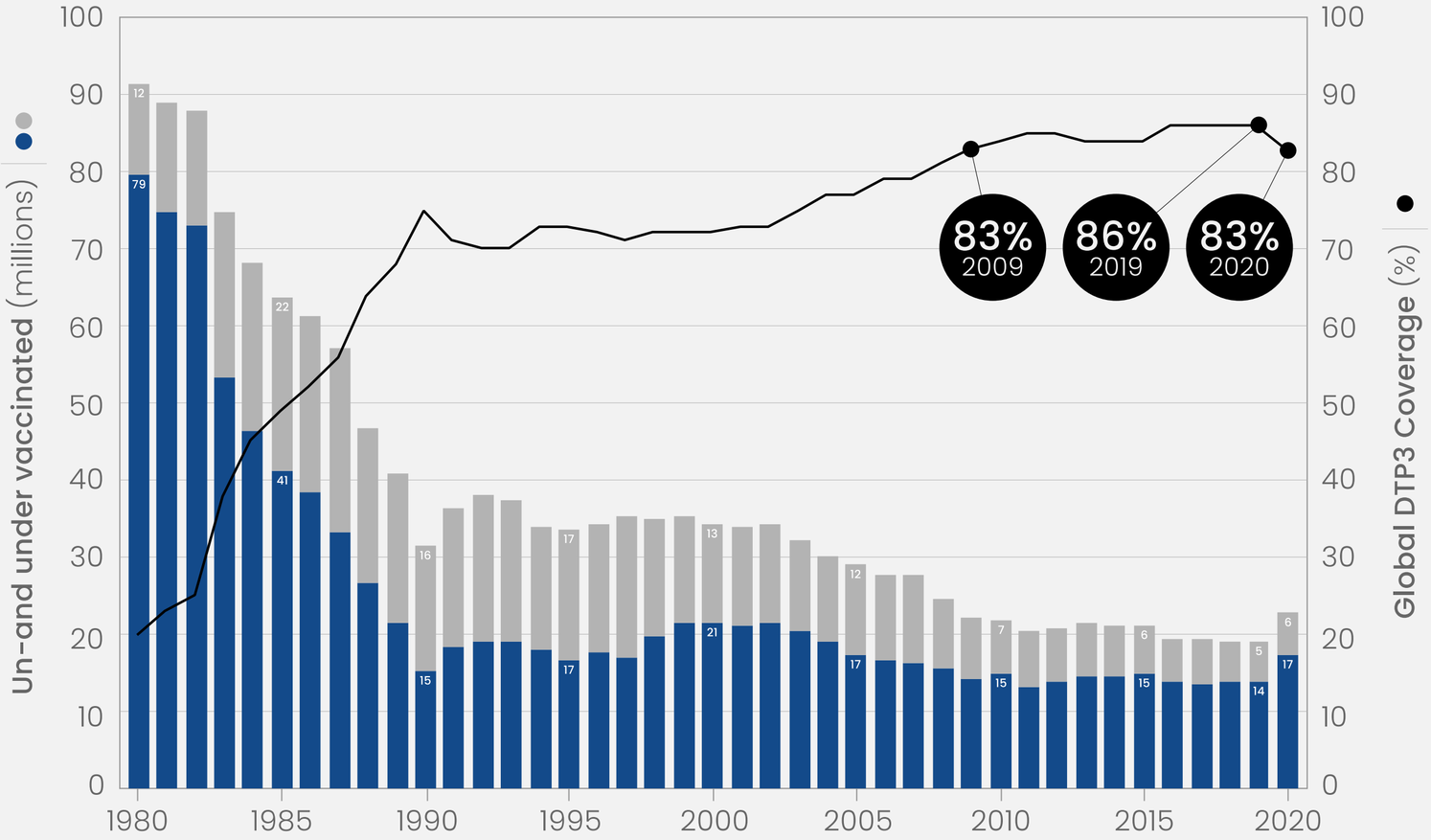
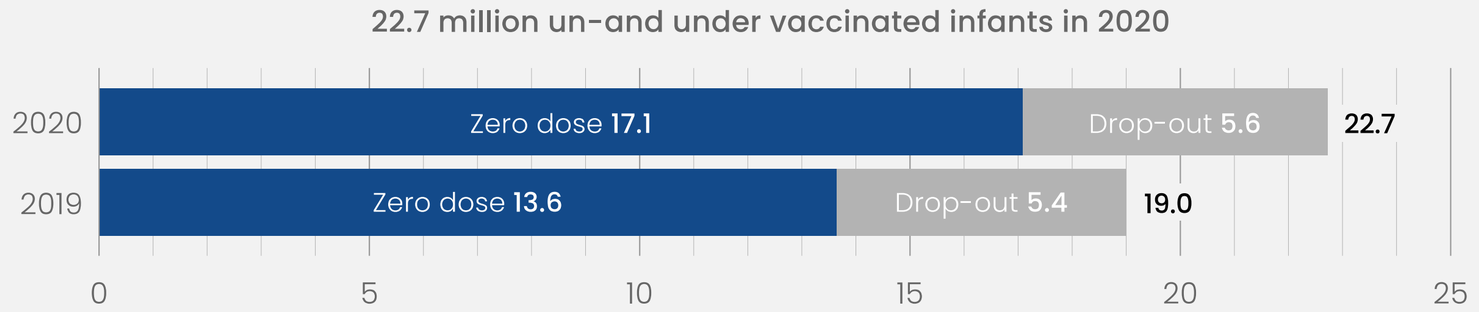
Infant immunization coverage dropped to 83% in 2020, leaving 3.7 million more children un-or under vaccinated than in 2019

Coverage of a third dose of vaccine protecting against diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis (DTP-3) dropped to 83% in 2020, leaving 22.7 million children vulnerable to vaccine preventable diseases.

The key goal of the Immunization Agenda 2030 is to make vaccination achievable for everyone, everywhere, at every age, by 2030. The Covid-19 pandemic and associated disruptions have strained health systems in 2020, resulting in 22.7 million children missing out on vaccination, 3.7 million more than in 2019 and the highest number since 2009. Moreover, the number of children receiving no vaccines through the routine immunization programme - "zero-dose children" – increased from 13.6 to 17.1m.

In this analysis, zero-dose children are those who received no doses of DTP. Under-vaccinated (drop-out) are those who received at least one dose, but not a third dose of DTP.





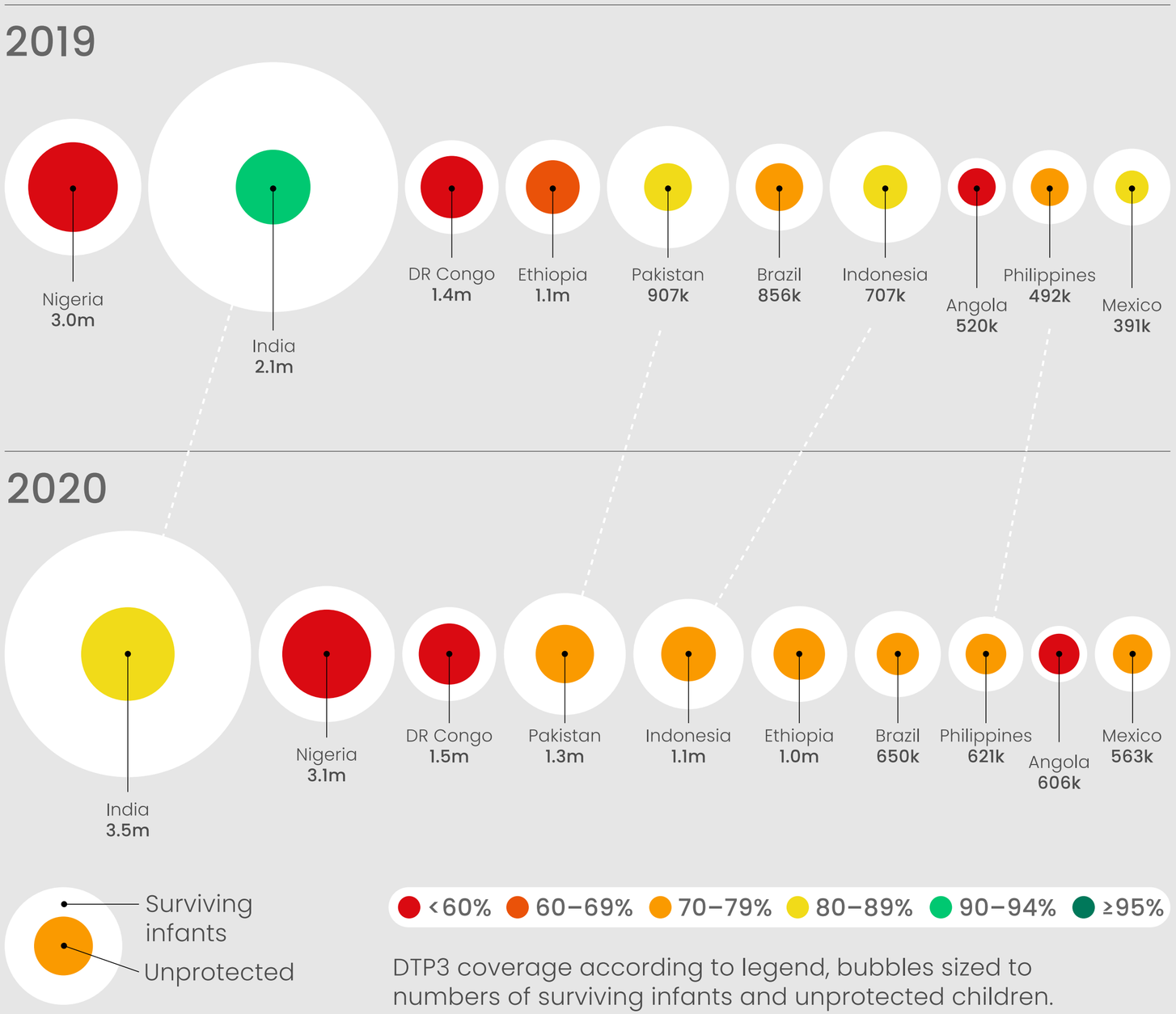
Just 10 countries account for 62% of unprotected children

Countries with most unprotected children.

10 countries account for 56 of 136 million surviving infants (41%), and 14 of the 23 million (62%) under and unvaccinated children worldwide. These countries include some with moderate coverage and very large birth cohorts, and others with substantially lower coverage.

Middle income countries account for an increasing share of this list. India experiences a relatively large drop in coverage in 2020 (DTP3 fell from 91% to 85%) and overtakes Nigeria (stable at 57%) as the country with most un-and under vaccinated children.

Un-or under vaccination and lack of protection is measured through the lack of DTP 1 and 3 in this analysis.



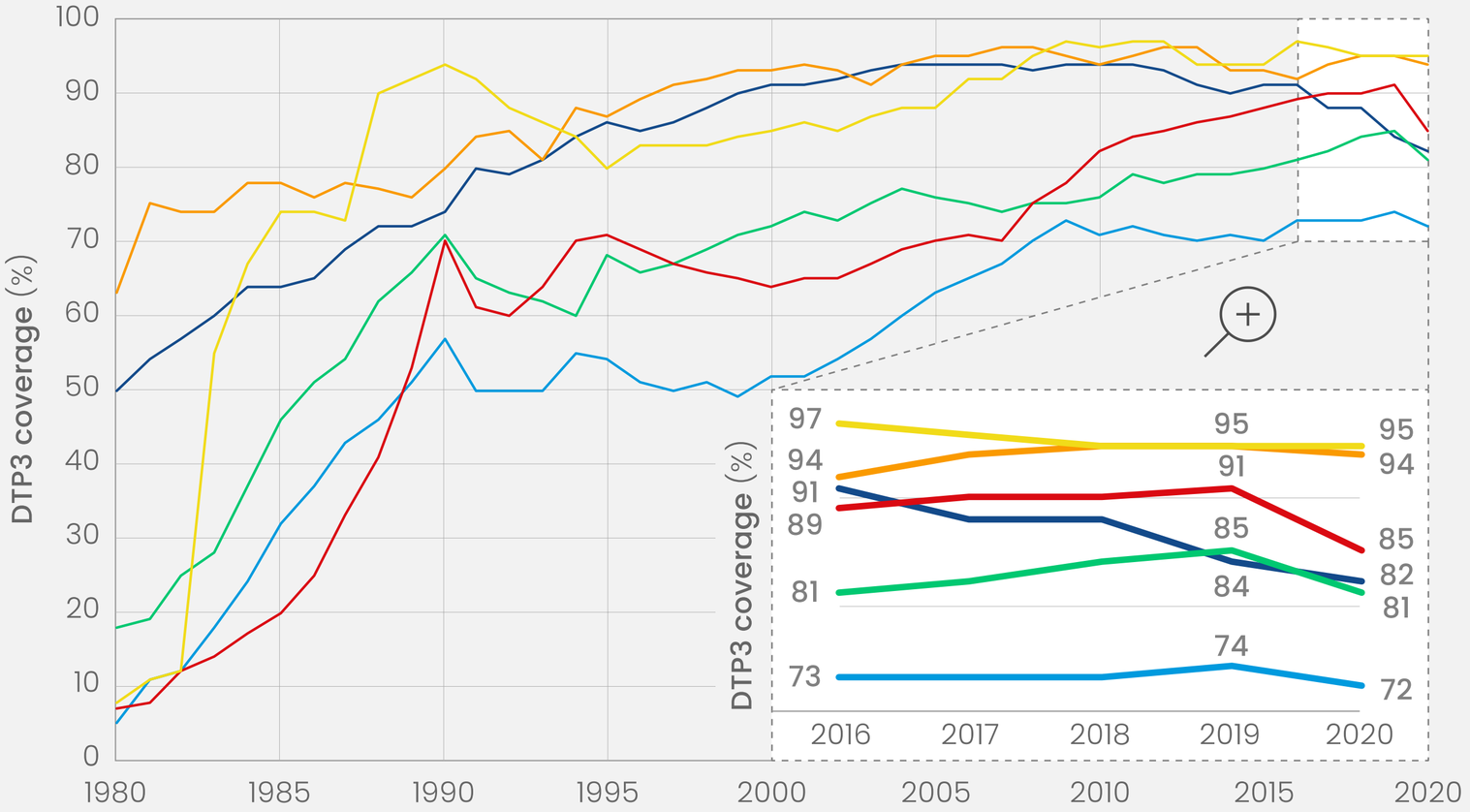
Vaccine coverage was affected unevenly between regions

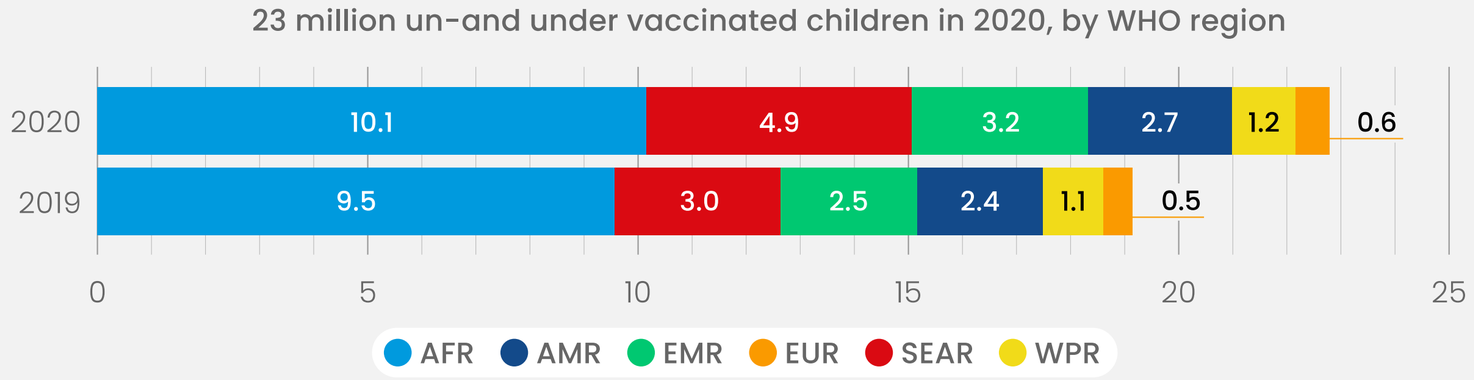
The South East Asian and Eastern Mediterranean Regions' vaccine coverage were most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and related disruptions.

The Region of the Americas also experiences a significant drop, which continues recent trends.

In the African, Western Pacific and European Regions, the COVID-19 pandemic didn't lead to significantly lower reported DTP3 coverage for 2020, reflecting significant efforts to recover from acute drops during the year and to sustain immunization as an essential health service.

Un-, and under- vaccination is measured through the lack of DTP 1 and 3, respectively, in this analysis.





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Countries supported by the Gavi Alliance experienced a larger setback than higher income countries

The Gavi Alliance provides vaccines and immunization programme financial support to lower income countries.

Since 2000, coverage in the group of "Gavi countries" has increased markedly, narrowing the gap with higher income countries. However, in 2020 the decline in coverage in countries supported by Gavi is somewhat larger than in other countries, highlighting that gains in vaccine coverage remain fragile and are not yet as resilient to programme shocks as those in countries with longstanding strengths in immunization programmes.

The decline sets progress in Gavi countries back to their 2014 level.

"Gavi countries" refers to the list of 68 currently supported countries, and excludes graduated countries.

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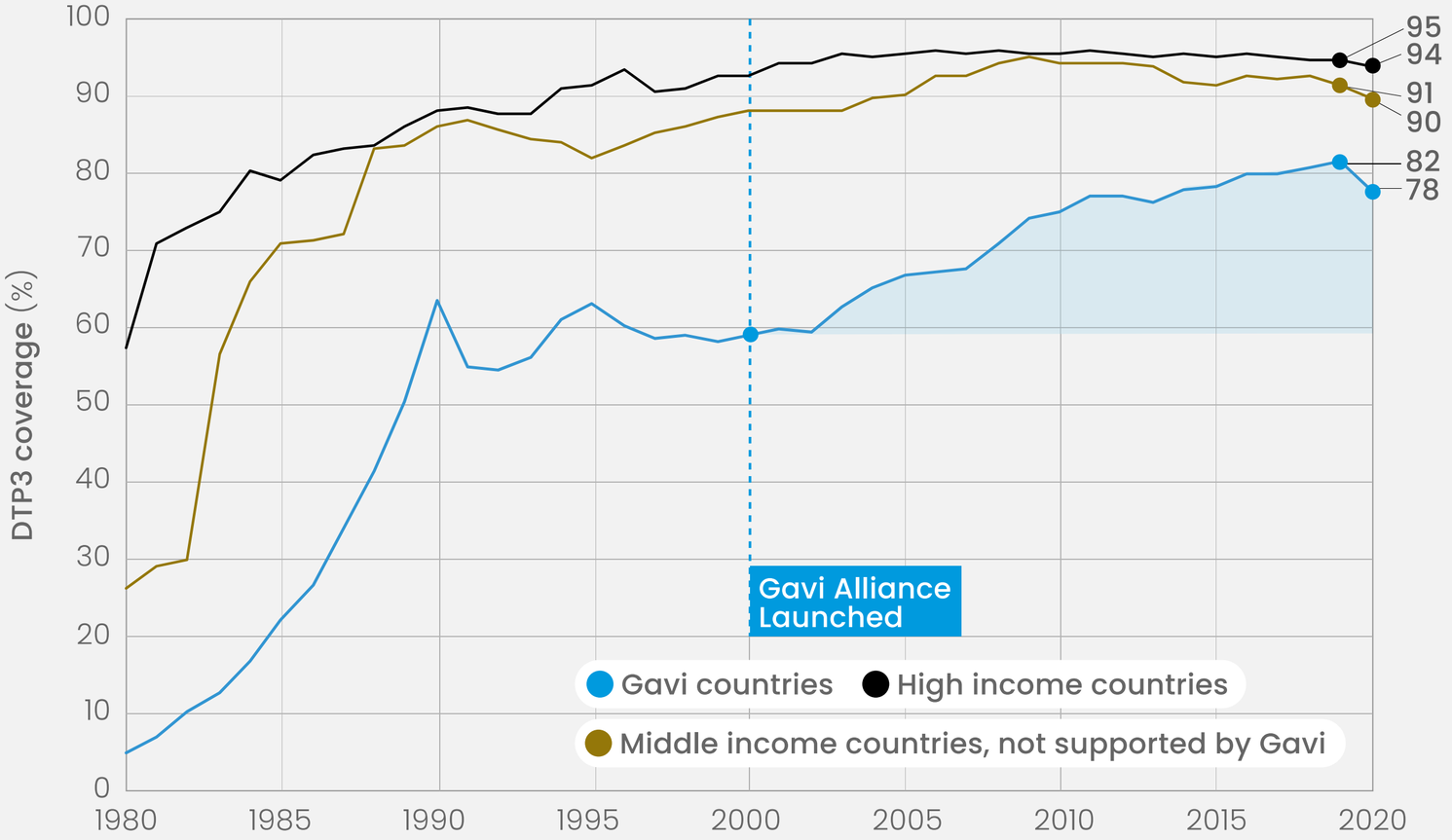
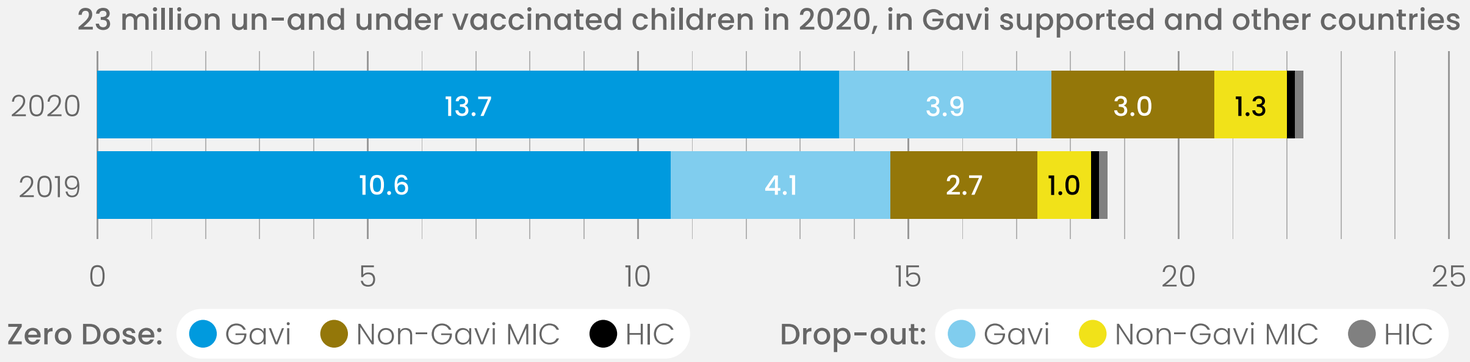




Disruption and recovery of immunization during the Covid-19 pandemic

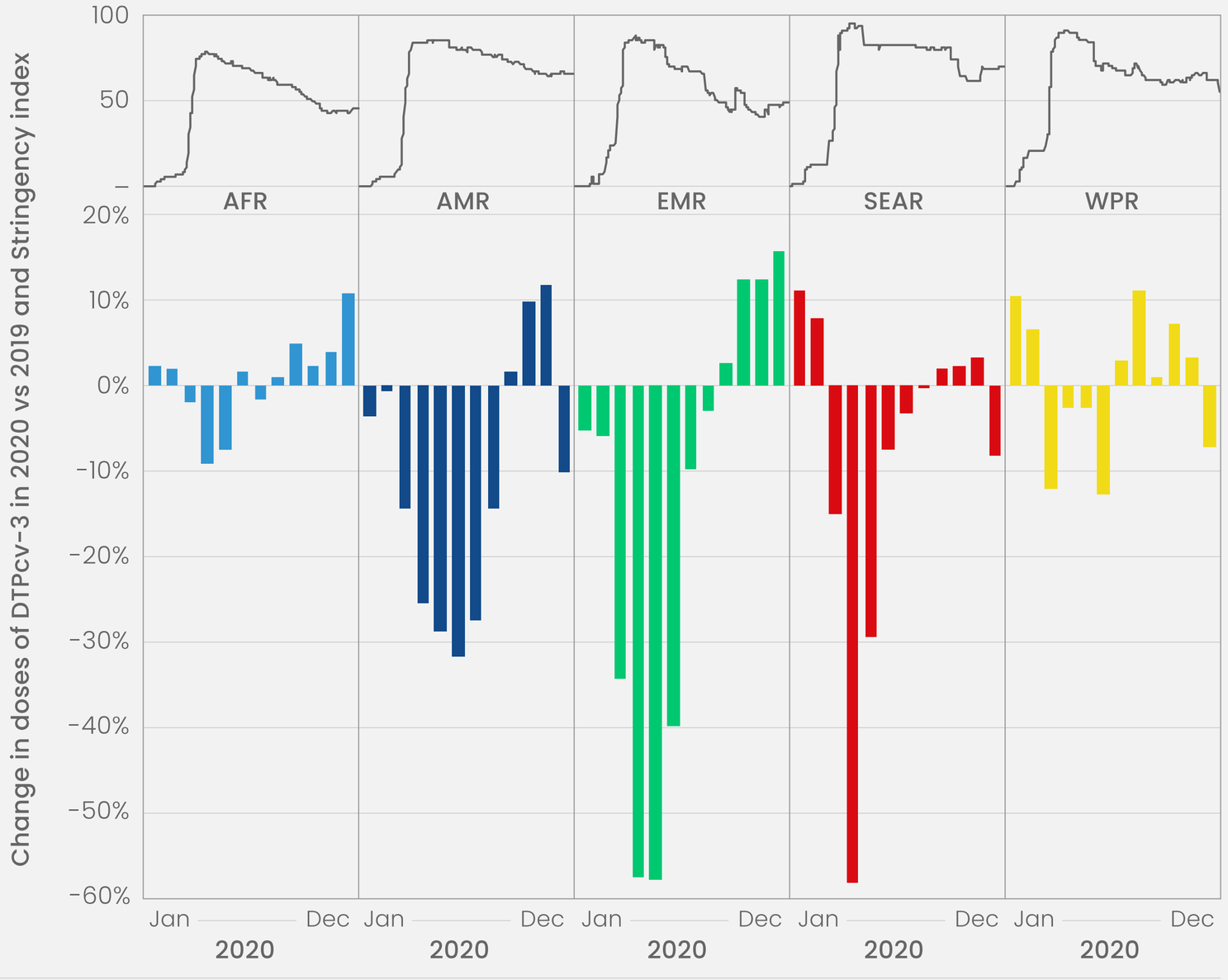
Patterns of disruption and recovery also varied across regions.

Monthly reported data, by a subset of member states, shows the relatively larger impact of COVID-19 disruptions in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, the South East Asian Region and the Region of the Americas.

The Eastern Mediterranean Region was able to mount the most robust recovery efforts.

The top of the chart shows a COVID-19 response stringency index for the reporting countries, compiled from the index provided by the Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker, Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford. (Daily index numbers for reporting countries are weighted by birth cohort).

Stringency index - The index records the strictness of 'lockdown style' policies that primarily restrict people's behaviour. It is calculated using all ordinal containment and closure policy indicators, plus an indicator recording public information campaigns. https://www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/research/research-projects/covid-19-government-response-tracker



Completeness: 97% 30% 65% 100% 15%

Percentage of each regional birth cohort represented by the countries that reported monthly data

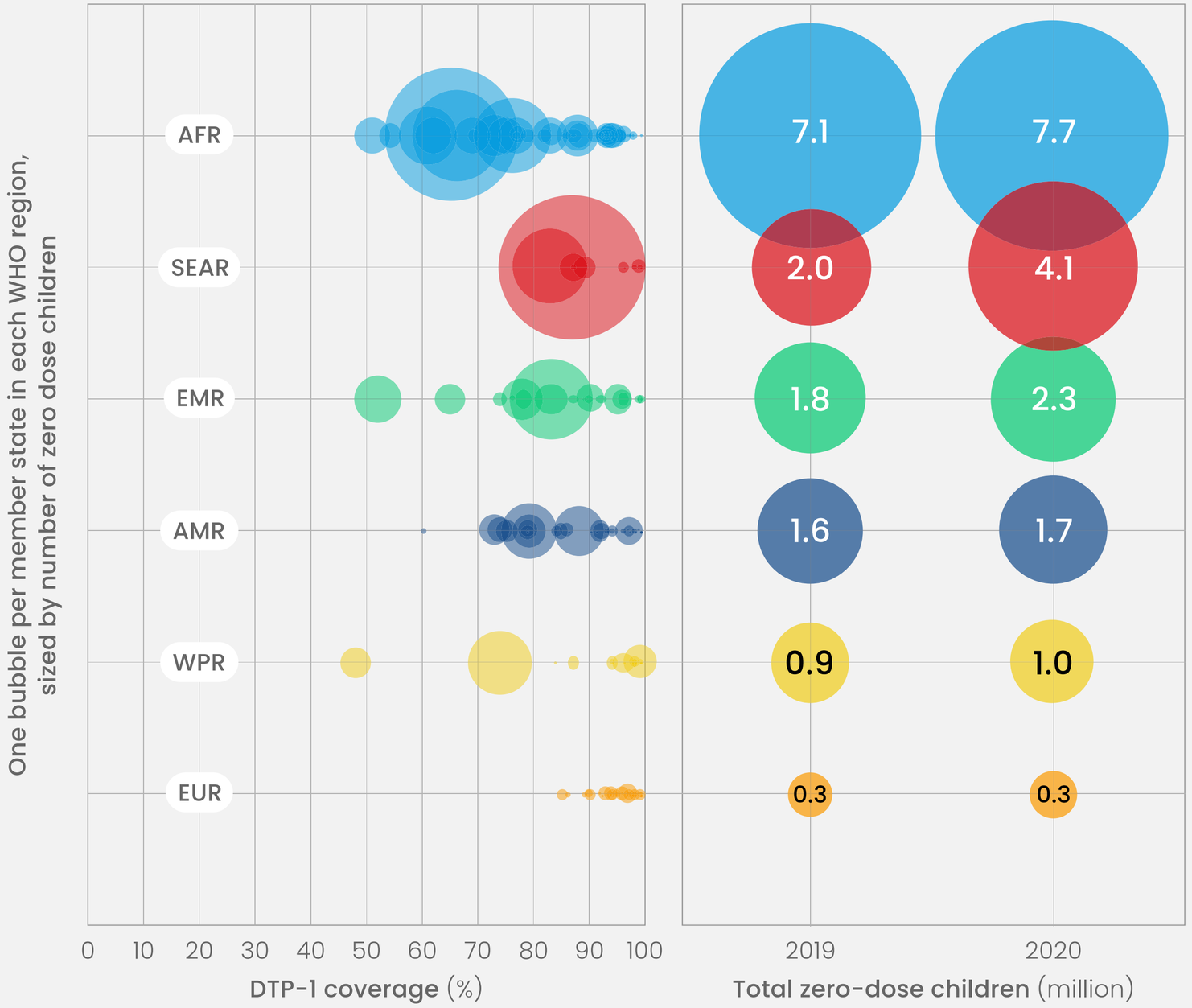
The number of “zero-dose children*” increased across all regions in 2020

The 17 million children who didn’t receive an initial dose of basic vaccines often lack access to immunization services and other health services.

Zero-dose children live disproportionally in the African continent and in countries affected by conflict. They are from families or communities likely to lack access to other health and welfare services and are subject to multiple deprivations.

Regions with the strictest COVID-19 response measures experienced the largest increases in zero dose children, because service provision and especially outreach activities were affected.

** Zero dose children defined as those lacking DTP1.*



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Coverage of new and underused vaccines also declined along with DTP containing vaccines in 2020

New and underused vaccine coverage is converging with coverage of established vaccines.

While there has been incremental progress for established vaccines such as those protecting against polio, measles, rubella, diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis (DTP), newer vaccines are reaching those who need them faster than before, but with a disruption in progress in 2020..

That list includes vaccines against hepatitis B and Haemophilus influenzae type B (Hib) - which are often combined in the same vaccine as DTP – Pneumococcus, Rotavirus, Inactivated Polio Vaccine, and Human Papilloma Virus vaccine.

In 2020, many vaccines experienced drops in line