



Strategic plan for measles and rubella elimination in WHO South-East Asia Region: 2020–2024



World Health
Organization
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR South-East Asia

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FOREWORD



In September 2019 the Seventy-Second Session of the Regional Committee for WHO South-East Asia Region committed to eliminate measles and rubella by 2023, replacing the earlier target of eliminating measles and controlling rubella and congenital rubella syndrome. The new target is one of the Region's eight Flagship Priorities and reflects the Region's ongoing progress against vaccine-preventable diseases generally and measles and rubella specifically. Achieving the revised target will hasten progress towards WHO's global 'triple billion' targets and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The following Strategic Plan, which the Regional Committee endorsed, will provide strategic direction to all Member States to eliminate measles and rubella by 2023. It was developed in consultation with Member States, experts, professional bodies and academia and is based on years of experience in vaccine-preventable disease eradication, elimination and control activities in the Region. The Plan incorporates the lessons learnt from the implementation of the previous strategic plan and stresses the importance of strengthening routine immunization systems, laboratory-supported case-based surveillance, outbreak preparedness and timely response. To sustain and accelerate progress, the Plan also highlights several evidence-based and innovative enablers that should be leveraged as and where needed.

The strategies outlined in this Plan should be implemented optimally and on time to achieve the elimination targets. To help do that, all 11 of the Region's Member States, with the support of partners, must increase the visibility of measles and rubella elimination activities and make the investments needed to strengthen health systems and achieve equitable access to immunization services. WHO is committed to supporting and monitoring each Member State's progress.

With strong partnerships, resources and political will, together we can eliminate measles and rubella in the South-East Asia Region by 2023. Let us use this Strategic Plan to expand equitable access to measles and rubella vaccines, to reach the unreached and underserved, and to save many more lives as we advance towards the Region's Flagship Priorities, WHO's triple billion targets and Sustainable Development Goal 3: ensuring healthy lives and promoting health and well-being for all at all ages.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'P. Khetrapal'.

Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh
Regional Director

ACRONYMS

AEFI	adverse event following immunization	ORI	outbreak response immunization
CRS	congenital rubella syndrome	RCV	rubella-containing vaccine
EPI	Expanded Programme On Immunization	REC	reach every child
Gavi	Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance	RED	reach every district
GPW	General Programme of Work	RI	routine immunization
IgM	immunoglobulin M	RRL	Regional Reference Lab
ITAG	Immunization Technical Advisory Group	RVC	Regional Verification Commission
IVD	Immunizations and Vaccine Development	SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
M&RI	Measles and Rubella Initiative	SEA	South-East Asia
MCV	measles-containing vaccine	SEA-RVC	South-East Asia Regional Verification Commission
MDG	Millennium Development Goal	SIA	supplementary immunization activity
MR	measles–rubella	SO	strategic objective
MRCV	measles and rubella-containing vaccine	UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
NGO	nongovernmental organization	US CDC	United States Centers for Disease Control
NITAG	national immunization technical advisory group	WHO	World Health Organization
NMRL	national measles and rubella laboratory		
NVC	national verification committee		

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