

UNICEF and the Government of Japan join efforts to reinforce routine immunization and birth registration in Chad

N'Djamena (Chad) 1 December 2021: The Government of Japan and UNICEF will support children's immunization efforts in Chad by reinforcing the cold chain and improving civil registration of newborns and issuance of their birth certificates, as well as integration into the immunization delivery system, in seven priority provinces throughout the country. This joint action will enable 150,000 children under one year of age to receive lifesaving routine immunization, as well as 190,000 pregnant women who will be vaccinated against tetanus and ensure 28,000 newborns are accounted for, within the civil registration system and database.

Despite slight improvements over the last years, with Chad declared free of wild poliovirus circulation, absence of outbreaks of meningitis A and status of elimination of neonatal tetanus, Chad continues to face outbreaks of vaccine preventable diseases due to low coverage. According to WUENIC (WHO and UNICEF Estimates of National Immunization Coverage), Penta 3 coverage improved from 41 per cent in 2016 to 52 per cent in 2020 and Measles coverage from 37 per cent to 47 per cent. The cold chain, which coverage is around 50% in Chad, is the backbone of a successful immunization programme

Through the USD 1.3 million contribution provided by the Government of Japan, UNICEF will purchase and install 112 solar fridges in health facilities, as well as 16 solar freezers in sanitary districts, in order to improve vaccine storage and management in the seven provinces targeted by the programme (Bahr El Ghazal, Borkou, Ennedi Ouest, Mayo Kebbi Ouest, Moyen Chari, Tandjilé and Tibesti) over the 18 months. Health workers will be trained on the maintenance of solar installations to ensure their sustainability.

Health workers will also be trained on birth registration procedures, so they can help families ensure that children receive a birth certificate and are enrolled in the routine immunization programme. In Chad, only 25.7% of children under five are registered with the civil registry, of whom 25.9% of boys and 25.5% of girls.

"Through this programme, we are addressing two of the most pressing issues affecting children in Chad, says Jacques Boyer, UNICEF Representative. Children who are protected by immunization and have a legal existence will grow up healthier and safer".

"This cooperation will contribute to the promotion of universal health coverage in Chad," says IKEDA Kiyohiko, Chargés d'affaires ad interim of the Japanese Embassy in Chad. "Our contribution also reflects the firm determination of the people of Japan to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals 2030."

UNICEF and the Government of Japan have been partnering for several years to respond to the critical needs of children in Chad. This partnership allows to continue and expand the lifesaving assistance provided to the Chadian health system.