

MEASLES

INITIATIVE



The Measles Initiative is a partnership committed to reducing measles deaths globally. Launched in 2001, the Measles Initiative—led by the American Red Cross, the United Nations Foundation, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, UNICEF and the World Health Organization—provides technical and financial support to governments and communities on vaccination campaigns worldwide. To date, the Initiative has supported the vaccination of more than 400 million children helping to reduce measles deaths by 68% globally (compared to 2000). To learn more or make a donation, visit www.measlesinitiative.org.

ABOUT MEASLES:

- Measles remains a leading cause of death among young children, especially in developing countries. In 2006, an estimated 242,000 people, mostly children under five years of age, died from measles. Nearly 600 children under 5 years die from measles each day.
- Measles is one of the most contagious diseases known and causes severe health complications, such as pneumonia, blindness, diarrhea, encephalitis, corneal scarring and respiratory problems.
- Millions of children are at risk from measles. Malnourished and un-immunized children under five years of age are most vulnerable of dying from this disease.
- It costs less than US \$1 to vaccinate a child against measles. This is one of the most cost-effective health interventions available.

PROGRESS TO DATE:

- From 2000 to 2006, measles deaths fell by 68% globally, from an estimated 757,000 deaths to an estimated 242,000 deaths. During this period, measles deaths in Africa dropped by 91%, from 396,000 to 36,000.
- The Measles Initiative has supported vaccination campaigns in more than 50 countries, mostly in Africa and Asia. Since 2001, more than 400 million children received measles vaccines in Measles Initiative supported campaigns. In 2006, global routine measles vaccination coverage reached an estimated 80%, up from 72% in 2000.
- Mass measles vaccination campaigns increasingly include additional health interventions. Since 2001, the Measles Initiative with other partners has supported the distribution of more than 29 million insecticide-treated bed nets for malaria prevention, 30 million doses of de-worming medicine, and more than 87 million doses of vitamin A.

WHAT'S NEXT:

- The partnership is now focused on the goal of reducing measles deaths by 90% worldwide by 2010 (compared to 2000).
- To achieve this goal, the Initiative is supporting the full implementation of measles mortality reduction activities in remaining large countries with a high measles burden, such as India and Pakistan.
- Despite the drop in measles deaths since 2000, there is more work to be done to ensure that children are protected. In 2006, more than 26 million one-year old children did not receive a dose of measles vaccine through routine immunization services.