EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2016 was a year of victory and challenge in the global fight against measles and rubella.

From 2000 through the end of 2016, measles vaccines saved an estimated 20.3 million lives. All six WHO regions— including the Americas free of endemic measles since 2000, and the Americas achieved its first region to be declared free of endemic measles. This, along with consistent elimination efforts in 2016, makes the Americas the first region to free of endemic measles and rubella deaths. Before his death in 2014, Dr. Ciro De Quadros, who was one of the first to envision a measles and rubella-free Americas, the first region to be declared free of endemic measles. This, along with the political will of leaders and the strong financial support the world has provided, demonstrates that with political will, and with adequate financing, it is possible to eliminate diseases.

The $10 million outbreak response funds M&RI receives each year from Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, must be similarly used for a wide range of purposes. M&RI must apply these funds not only to stop the ongoing circulation of deadly viruses, but also to ensure that if a disease is reintroduced, it does not begin to circulate—that’s the goal of investment in biorepositories. M&RI must also strategically prepare for improving surveillance and the rapid identification of outbreaks—key tools to interrupt outbreaks and stop their spread. No outbreak response funds will be effective if the world is not prepared to be alerted when a new outbreak occurs.

But we cannot forget that mass campaigns are supplemental to routine immunization activities, and, as such, must be used in concert with strengthening immunization delivery systems. M&RI has more funding available to do this than ever before. Campaigns must be multilayered to raise awareness of the importance of on-time delivery of vaccines, to ensure that children are vaccinated, and to engage community members to create and sustain the demand for vaccines.

The support we provide to countries implementing interventions has helped to saved millions of lives and is the result of 14 years of incredible commitment by our partners and our many dedicated Measles & Rubella Initiative (M&RI) partners. Yet, the lives of 2.5 million unvaccinated children are in danger from measles—a disease completely preventable with two doses of a safe, live-saving vaccine costing less than $2 per child per dose and that has been used for 50 years. Every $1 invested results in $58 of cost savings. Over half of the children at risk come from 6 countries, whose efforts to control measles are undermined by weak health systems. We must urgently ramp up our efforts to meet our goals of eliminating measles and rubella.

For those living in countries with routine measles vaccination rates of more than 90%, routine vaccination, alongside outbreak response funds, is the best way to maintain and improve coverage. M&RI has more funding available to do this than ever before. Campaigns must be multilayered to raise awareness of the importance of on-time delivery of vaccines, to ensure that children are vaccinated, and to engage community members to create and sustain the demand for vaccines.

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From 2000 through the end of 2016, measles vaccines saved an estimated 20.3 million lives. All six WHO regions—including all 194 Member States—have committed to eliminating measles. In September 2016, the Americas became the first region to be declared free of endemic measles. This, along with consistent elimination efforts in 2016, makes the Americas the first region to be free of endemic measles and rubella. Before his death in 2014, Dr. Ciro De Quadros, who was one of the first to envision a measles and rubella-free Americas, the first region to be declared free of endemic measles. This, along with the political will of leaders and the strong financial support the world has provided, demonstrates that with political will, and with adequate financing, it is possible to eliminate diseases.

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In September 2016, the regional verification commission declared the Americas region free of endemic measles. The countries with the largest number of reported measles cases in 2016:

- Nigeria: 17,250
- DR Congo: 154,830
- Somalia: 154,830
- Ethiopia: 128,539
- India: 128,539
- Bangladesh: 6,267
- Viet Nam: 5,657
- Pakistan: 2,435
- Indonesia: 1,770
- China: 1,200
- Kenya: 1,200
- Romania: 7

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- Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Philippines and Zambia have helped contribute to our understanding of how to best build strong platforms. This effort transforms immunization delivery from the 1970’s model by serving to accommodate the increasing number of recommended vaccines and doses. This will help to achieve our GVAP targets by promoting to give vaccines to children who are missing infant doses.

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