THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

PRESS STATEMENT

UPDATE ON NATIONAL MEASLES-RUBELLA AND POLIO IMMUNISATION CAMPAIGN 2019

Hon. Dr. Aceng Jane Ruth

Minister of Health

October 24th 2019
On behalf of the Ministry of Health and the Government of Uganda, I take this opportunity to welcome you all to this press conference convened to update the public on the just concluded national Measles- Rubella and Polio immunisation campaign.

Under this campaign, Ministry of Health targeted Eighteen Million and one hundred thousand (18,100,000) children (under 15yrs of age) for Measles and Rubella vaccination. Preliminary results indicated that Eighteen Million, Seven Hundred and Seventy Thousand Seven hundred and six (18,770,706) children representing (105.2%) have been vaccinated against Measles and Rubella. In the same vein, 7,329,635 million (86.2%) children were vaccinated against Polio out of the targeted 8.2 million during the mass immunisation campaign.

Please note that these results represent partial results from 35,754 (95%) reporting posts out of the 37,398 vaccination posts country wide. We will continue to update the public of the statistics as more results keep trickling in especially from regions which were granted extension and those that have experienced network challenges like Karamoja sub-region, Kalangala and Buikwe Districts.

I would like to reemphasise that the Ministry of Health implemented the vaccination campaign in order to interrupt the Measles and Rubella outbreaks in which over 300,000 cases were reported, 46,000 patients and 587 deaths were recorded. 95% of the cases were between the 1 year and 15 years. Uganda is also at high risk of importation of Polio.

The mass immunization campaign against Measles- Rubella and Polio was launched in Mayuge District on Tuesday, 15th October 2019 and rolled out to the rest of country from Wednesday 16th October to Monday 22nd October, 2019.

The exercise was conducted in all schools and communities countrywide targeting all children under 15 years of age whether previously immunized or not in order to interrupt circulation of Measles and Rubella diseases.
At the same time, the campaign was a launching pad to introduce the Measles-Rubella vaccine into the routine immunization schedule of the country; replacing the single Measles vaccine with the combined Measles and Rubella vaccine in the immunization schedule moving forward.
The Ministry of Health has advised the districts that have balances of vaccine stocks of Measles and Rubella to make it available for children aged 9 months-15 years who missed the vaccination exercise. Parents are encouraged to visit the health facilities within their respective districts to enable their children access the vaccines. In Kampala, the following vaccination posts have been designated; Kawempe Hospital, Child Health in Mulago NRH and KCCA clinic.

All schools that did not carry out the mass immunisation exercise are required to liaise with the District Health Officers (DHOs) to vaccinate school children within the next two weeks at the health facilities.

The Measles Rubella vaccines will be available for routine immunisation schedule in all health facilities from mid-November, 2019 and parents with children aged nine months of age will be required to take their children for Measles and Rubella vaccination accordingly.

In order to consolidate the achievements of the mass Measles and Rubella vaccination as a concrete foundation for elimination of Measles in Uganda, the Ministry of Health working with partners will strengthen routine immunisation and will work towards making the 2\textsuperscript{nd} dose of the Measles Rubella (MR) vaccine available within the next two years. The 2\textsuperscript{nd} dose of the MR vaccine is intended to reduce risk and increase protection against Measles and Rubella and save the country repetitive and costly mass measles vaccinations.

All children vaccinated during this mass immunisation exercise should have a mark on their finger and receive an immunisation card indicating the vaccines received. Parents and guardians are advised to keep their children’s immunisation cards carefully and make them available when requested for by the schools.

The Ministry of Health would like to reiterate that all vaccines administered are pre-qualified by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and are safe, effective and efficacious.

In a special way, on behalf of Government of Uganda, allow me to recognise the tireless efforts, unity and solidarity exhibited by all Technical, Political
administrative, civic leaders, health workers, teachers and educationists at national and district level that participated in this exercise and ensured that no child was left behind during this campaign.

Finally, the Ministry of Health would like to appreciate the Government of Uganda, GAVI, the World Health Organisation (WHO), CHAI, UNICEF, Lions Club, Uganda Medical Association (UMA) and Uganda Pediatric Association (UPA) and all health workers for their guidance, support and participation to ensure that this mass immunisation campaign to protect our children was carried out swiftly.

For God and My country

Hon. Dr. Aceng Jane Ruth

Minister of Health