

SUSTAINABLE IMMUNIZATION FINANCING

Summary Digest

Volume 1, Issue 2 | August 2009



Sabin Vaccine Institute Sponsors Parliamentary Briefings in Cameroon, Mali, Senegal

In this issue:

- SVI Sponsors Parliamentary Briefings in Cameroon, Senegal, Mali
- Uganda: Quarterly Reporting Promotes Accountability
- SIF Program active in DR Congo
- Nepali Parliamentarians to be Briefed on Immunization Financing
- Liberia: EPI Team Focuses on Finance
- Update: Field Activities
- Recommended Resources

In August, Sabin Vaccine Institute's Sustainable Immunization Financing Program (SIF) sponsored parliamentary briefings on immunization finance in Cameroon, Mali and Senegal. The events brought together EPI Program managers and their counterparts from ministries of finance, budget and planning. External partners also attended, including health officers from UNICEF, WHO, the World Bank and USAID. The purpose of the briefings was to update MPs who sit on budget and health commissions about immunization performance and budgetary trends. Accustomed to broad, sector-level overviews, for many it was their first in-depth look at a health program.

- In Yaoundé, Cameroon, Permanent Secretary for EPI Dr. Marie KOBELA and her team described how the EPI serves as a platform for immunization, nutrition and maternal health activities. Vaccine-preventable diseases are now rare in Cameroon. Yet a program review last year found that 53% of planned EPI activities were not carried out due to budgetary shortfalls. Only 61% of the approved budget was actually delivered. Incomplete documentation in the budget request could be the cause, suggested Mr. EFFILA Cyrille, Budget Officer in the Ministry of Finance. The seven MPs in attendance agreed that



The Honorable Lydienne Epoube (right), Member of Parliament, greets colleagues at the SVI Parliamentary Briefing in Yaoundé.

Parliament should look into this problem and made a request to be included in the ICC Policy Committee.

- At the Palais National in Bamako, Mali, EPI Manager Dr. NOUHOUM KONE and his team briefed ten MPs on the Program's technical and budgetary performance. Budgetary shortfalls have not been a problem and expenditures have been close to 100% of allotments in 2006-2008. The government's share of the routine EPI budget steadily increased over this period. This will change next year when new pneumococcal and meningococcal disease vaccines are introduced.

"SVI Sponsors" continued on Page 3

Uganda: Quarterly Reporting Promotes Accountability

Parliaments play a critical role in ensuring that investments in essential health programs, such as EPI, are efficiently delivered. In Uganda, new/ improved budgetary practices are making this oversight function easier and more effective.

Uganda's innovative performance informed budgeting system scrutinizes program and budget performance each quarter. Discontented with previous reporting, the Ministry of Finance developed more stringent system in FY 2009/10. At the end of each quarter, spending agencies are required to account for past quarter expenditures and relate them to program outputs before the MoF releases the next quarterly

installment. The MoF is now sharing the quarterly reports with parliament, giving parliamentarians a more active and informed oversight role.

"Preparing a quarterly report is a prerequisite for a spending agency to receive its next quarterly disbursement," explains Samuel Huxley Wanyake, director of the Parliamentary Budget Office, which uses the MoF reports to prepare quarterly briefs parliamentary committees. "Therefore, all parties spend serious time in preparing them."

"Uganda: Quarterly Reporting" continued on Page 3



SIF Program Active in Democratic Republic of Congo

On 10 June 2009, Advocacy Program Director Mike McQuestion, SVI Senior Program Officer Hélène Mambu-ma-Disu and national EPI Director, Micheline Mabiala, met with members of the National Assembly's Sociocultural Commission, at the Palais du Peuple in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo. It was Helene's third meeting with the commission since joining the Advocacy Program team last May.

Presiding was the 1st Vice-President of the Commission, the Honorable Kathy Kathumwa. The parliamentarians were well aware that maintaining high immunization coverage will be crucial if the DRC is to achieve its Millennium Development Goals. But they still had many questions about how the immunization program is financed. The DRC's EPI Program is almost entirely dependent on external donors. The country will need to increase its EPI budget by US\$25m over the next two years in order to reduce this donor dependency and be able to introduce the new pneumococcal vaccine.

A former national EPI Director herself, Hélène and Dr. Mabiala are organizing a one-day briefing on immunization financing for the parliamentarians. Also participating will be representatives of the ministry of health, ministry of finance, the external donor

community and the media. In Hélène's words, "We need to start a dialog now, before the new budget proposals are made. The parliamentarians are ready and willing to act. We will keep them informed so that they can see how well the program works and how the government's money has been used so far. But we also want to hear from them. When it comes to the budget Parliament has the last word." The SVI-sponsored briefing will be held in Kinshasa in September. •



SIF Director Mike McQuestion (standing, center) & Program Officer Hélène Mambu-Ma-Disu (seated, 2nd from left) meet DR Congo's EPI Manager, Dr Micheline Mabiala (seated, 2nd from right); Honorable Vicky Katumwa, Vice-Chair, Sociocultural Commission, National Assembly (seated, left); and other members of the Commission.

"We need to start a dialogue now, before the new budget proposals are made."

Dr. Helene Mambu-Ma-Disu,
SIF Officer,
DR Congo

Nepali Parliamentarians to be Briefed on Immunization Financing

Nepal is one of a few developing countries on track to achieve its main mortality Millennium Development Goal: reducing child mortality by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015. One reason is the country's well developed EPI Program, which saved an estimated 100,000 children last year. In 2007, Nepal was financing around one-half of its EPI program costs. Since then the government's share has been falling as newer, more expensive vaccines are introduced to the program. In fiscal year 2009-10 the Ministry of Health and Population/Government of Nepal proposed to increase its health budget from 5.7% to up to 9% of its total national budget. But the Ministry of Finance has allocated only 6.24% of total national budget for health for FY 2009/10. (Immunization represents about 5.27 % of the total health budget.) The government's share on EPI vaccine is about 11.2%

of total vaccine costs for FY 2009/10, which is higher than that of FY 2007/08 (7.8%). But even with this increase, the country will remain donor-dependent as immunization costs continue to rise even faster.

Advocacy Program Officer Devendra Gnawali and senior officials from the Ministry of Health and Population and the Ministry of Finance are currently preparing a series of briefings to help newly elected parliamentarians better understand the intricacies of immunization financing. The three-part "Talk Program on Immunization" series kicks off on 11 September and continues into December 2009. Though currently preoccupied with writing a new constitution, Nepal's Constituent Assembly will have to decide then whether to approve or reject the national budget. •



Liberia: EPI Team Focuses on Finance

On 17 July, SVI Senior Program Officer Clifford Kamara met with a team of EPI supervisors and coordinators at the Booker Washington Institute in Katata, Margibi County, Liberia, about an hour's drive from Monrovia. Though the team was meeting to plan the next round of polio immunization campaigns, they invited Clifford to talk about the Advocacy Program. "It was a very interesting meeting", reports Clifford. "The EPI Manager, Thomas Nagbe, said it was the first time this group- the people who actually deliver the program- had ever discussed immunization financing. We talked a bit about involving new stakeholders, about using collective action to achieve a financially sustainable immunization program." Clifford and his counterparts are planning a briefing for legislators on immunization financing in Monrovia later this year. •



SVI Sponsors Parliamentary Briefings (continued from page 1)

- Eleven MPs attended the Dakar, Senegal briefing. In his presentation, EPI Manager Dr. El Hadji Mamadou NDIAYE pointed out that Senegal was the first West African country to be declared polio-free, in 2004. But budgetary problems now threaten the program. This past year there have been vaccine shortages caused by delays in government funding. Fewer children have been immunized this year compared to the same date last year. With the introduction of new vaccines, the government must increase its GAVI co-payments by an estimated CFA250m (US\$625,000) next year and find additional funds for new cold chain equipment. The MOH informed that they will increase the FY10 Immunization Budget to 1 billion CFA compared to CFA 850 million in FY09. The MPs promised to advocate for an increase in the national EPI budget.

Several themes arose in all three meetings. MPs were impressed to see up-to-date data and to be able to compare their country's vaccine coverage levels to those of neighboring countries. They wanted to know more about EPI performance in their respective constituencies. Identifying and resolving budgetary bottlenecks for EPI, all participants agreed, will lead to a more efficient public health sector. They also ask SVI to brief all Parliamentarians, the SENAT and the council of mayors in each countries. In the coming weeks Advocacy Program Officers will organize similar briefings in the other pilot countries. •

Uganda: Quarterly Reporting (continued from page 1)

In the improved monitoring requirement, parliamentarians along with MoF require additionally the spending agency reports on procurement and recruitment plans and showing how the spending agencies plan to utilize their next quarterly installments.

Parliamentarians are already noting improvements. "The quarterly system eliminates the common problem of unspent funds being misused at the end of the year," reports Hon. Rose Akol, Chairperson of the Parliamentary Budget Committee. "It also safeguards important programs from budgetary shortfalls."

Uganda's performance informed budgeting system keeps parliamentarians more aware of the health sector's technical and budgetary performance. They now have a clearer picture of how specific Ministry of Health programs affect health conditions in their respective districts and at what cost. In September 2009, the Sabin Vaccine Institute will sponsor the first in a series of parliamentary briefings in Uganda. Counterparts from the MoF, MoH and parliament will focus on financing arrangements for the country's priority health programs. •

"[Quarterly reporting] safeguards important programs from budgetary shortfalls."

Hon. Rose Akol,
Chairperson,
Parliamentary Budgetary
Committee,
Uganda

Have you visited us online?

The Sustainable Immunization Financing Program is building a comprehensive website with country pages for all fifteen pilot countries. Visit us today at www.sabin.org/sif.

Have a question or comment? Please e-mail us at sif@sabin.org.





Update: Field Activities

It has been an exciting year for Sabin's Sustainable Immunization Financing Program. Since September 2008, The SIF Program has initiated field activities in 14 of 15 selected pilot countries (listed at right.) Our five Program Officers— citizens of Cameroon, DR Congo, Nepal, Sierra Leone, and Uganda— have collaborated extensively with key immunization stakeholders in their home countries. They have also visited seven of the ten non resident countries at least twice; four of these countries (Kenya, Cambodia, Mali, Senegal) have each been visited three or more times.

Program Officers also regularly attend ICC and SWAp subcommittee meetings and have participated in sectoral evaluations, policy reviews (Cameroon, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cambodia) and economic analyses (Uganda, Nepal) with their national counterparts. A few countries have not yet responded to proposed follow-up activities (Nigeria, Cambodia, Ethiopia).

In the coming quarter, we will continue to work with counterparts, strengthening the EPI investment case, tracking progress toward cMYP benchmarks, and sensitizing decision makers to the importance of immunization financing. •

* Includes SWAp subcommittees, technical working groups

Country	Visits	ICC Meetings*
Cambodia	3	1
Cameroon	Resident	4
DR Congo	Resident	2
Ethiopia	2	0
Kenya	3	0
Liberia	2	1
Madagascar	0	0
Mali	3	3
Nepal	Resident	2
Nigeria	1	0
Rwanda	1	0
Senegal	4	3
Sierra Leone	Resident	2
Sri Lanka	2	0
Uganda	Resident	6

Sustainable Immunization Financing: Recommended Resources

For more on health financing, the Sustainable Immunization Financing team recommends the following resources:

- The Collaborative Africa Budget Reform Initiative (CABRI) and the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) have released the **African Budget Survey, 2008**. Conducted in 26 countries this study examines all aspects of the budget cycle— including formulation, approval, and execution. Also taken into consideration are performance management and donor aid coordination. Read the full report online at <http://www.cabri-sbo.org/en/programmes/budget-practices-and-procedures/23-survey>.
- UNICEF has released its **Countdown to 2015: Tracking Progress in Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health (2008)**. This report is available online at <http://www.countdown2015mnch.org/reports-publications/2008report>.
- OECD has released a useful report on donor harmonization and aid effectiveness. Read **2008 Survey on Monitoring the Paris Declaration: Making Aid More Effective by 2010** at <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/58/41/41202121.pdf>.

Sustainable Immunization Financing is an initiative of the Sabin Vaccine Institute.



2000 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 7100
 Washington, DC, USA 20006
www.sabin.org/sif
sif@sabin.org