

## **Cambodia launches measles-rubella vaccination campaign for over 1.5 million children**



Photo by WHO

Cambodia on Thursday (October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024), launched a nationwide measles-rubella (MR) vaccination campaign to protect over 1.5 million children under five years old, said a joint press release.

The campaign is a critical measure to strengthen health security, protect against potential outbreaks, and support Cambodia's goal of becoming measles-free, the press release said. Speaking at the launch event in Phnom Penh, Minister of Health Chheang Ra encouraged all health staff and partners to work together to ensure full coverage of the target population and protect all children in the country from the two diseases.

"Health personnel have done a good job during previous immunization campaigns, and I am sure that during this campaign too, health staff will do everything they can to reach all children, especially those living in high-risk and hard-to-reach areas," he said.

According to the press release, Cambodia's 2023 national coverage for the first and second doses of the MR vaccine was 79 percent and 64 percent, respectively -- figures that remain below the levels needed to prevent outbreaks and avert deaths.

Marianna Trias, World Health Organization (WHO) representative to Cambodia, said measles and rubella are serious but entirely preventable threats that Cambodia's children should never have to face.

### **Nationwide campaign**

"This nationwide campaign is a vital step towards health equity, ensuring that no one is left behind in our mission to promote, protect, and provide health for all," she said.

"Together with the Ministry of Health and partners, WHO is committed to closing immunity gaps to strengthen health security and protect everyone in our communities from outbreaks and make Cambodia measles-free for every family," Trias added.

Will Parks, representative of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to Cambodia, said immunization has always been at the forefront of UNICEF's efforts to protect the most marginalized children.

"By supporting this vaccination campaign, we hope that we will contribute further to the strengthening of the health system in Cambodia to promote sustainable provision of quality vaccination services to all children," he said.

All children aged 9 to 59 months, including those who have previously received a measles or MR vaccine, are encouraged to receive a dose to boost community immunity, the press release said. -**Xinhua news agency, October 31, 2024, <https://english.news.cn>**