MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release
Updated 3 March 2024
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Inaugural Global Cervical Cancer Elimination Forum: Advancing the Call to Action
to catalyze momentum and commitments on worldwide movement to eliminate cervical cancer

WHAT: First global forum on elimination of cervical cancer — the fourth most common cancer in women worldwide. The Forum brings together senior ministry officials with leading global health and development agencies, donors, academia, civil society, and others to galvanize the global movement to eliminate cervical cancer. This requires accelerated progress on the three goals set out in the World Health Organization (WHO) agenda of vaccination, screening, and treatment to reach:

- 90% of girls vaccinated with the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine by age 15
- 70% of women screened with a high-performance test by age 35 and again at 45
- 90% of women with cervical disease receiving treatment

Participants will announce new and ambitious commitments — financial, policy, and programmatic — to advance the cervical cancer elimination agenda and accelerate the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 3 (health and well-being for all).

WHEN: 5-7 March 2024
- Press conference & opening ceremony: Tuesday, 5 March at 4pm EST
  - Live stream will be available and will be recorded (see event website for updates on timing/access to livestream)

WHO: Senior government officials, leading global health and development agencies, donors, civil society, and others. Speakers at the press conference to include:

- Dr. Gina Tambini, Representative of PAHO/WHO in Colombia (Moderator)
- Hon. Dr. Guillermo Alfonso Jaramillo Martínez, Minister of Health and Social Protection, Colombia
- Hon. Khumbize Kandodo Chiponda, Minister of Health, Government of Malawi
- Mr. Antón Leis García, Chief Executive Officer of AECID
● Dr. Bente Mikkelsen, Director, Noncommunicable Diseases, WHO
● Ms. Aurélia Nguyen, Chief Programme Officer at Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance
● Ms. Theo Sowa, Interim CEO/Director of the Graca Machel Trust

WHERE: Training Center of the Spanish Cooperation
Cl. 36 #2-74, El Centro, Cartagena de Indias,
Provincia de Cartagena, Bolívar, Colombia

Register to request media credentials to attend in-person or to receive live stream
information. Space in Cartagena is limited.

WHY: A woman dies every two minutes of cervical cancer, an entirely preventable disease. The
knowledge, tools, and opportunity exist to eliminate this form of cancer and save millions of
lives. But barriers and inequities in the hardest hit areas remain unacceptably high: of the
estimated 348,000 women who died of cervical cancer in 2022, 90% are from low- and
middle-income countries (LMICs).

Cervical cancer is one of only a few cancers that can be prevented by a vaccine. Vaccination
against HPV — the leading cause of cervical cancer — is a proven path to elimination. Yet due to
supply constraints, delivery challenges and the pandemic, just one in five adolescent girls has
been vaccinated. While vaccination coverage is improving thanks to concerted efforts from
countries and partners, uptake is too low, leaving thousands of adolescent girls and women
vulnerable to developing cervical cancer. The WHO’s recommendation of a one-dose HPV
vaccine opens new opportunities to reach more girls worldwide and will significantly reduce
costs and logistical barriers.

HPV screening and treatment is also critical to saving lives. Yet despite there being cost-effective
and evidence-based tools for screening and treatment, fewer than 5% of women in LMICs are
ever screened for cervical cancer. Major progress can be made by integrating cervical cancer
services into existing primary health care delivery.

Annual deaths from cervical cancer will likely reach 410,000 by 2030 if we do not change
course. This forum is a pivotal moment and a historic step in securing commitments to
eliminate, for the first time ever, a cancer globally.

About the Global Cervical Cancer Elimination Forum
The inaugural “Global Cervical Cancer Elimination Forum: Advancing the Call to Action,” taking place March
5-7, 2024, in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, will catalyze governments, donors, civil society and others to
recommit to the cervical cancer elimination agenda and to inspire country-level engagement. The Forum
offers a watershed moment for the world to collectively accelerate progress on a groundbreaking promise
made in 2020, when nearly 200 countries signed on to the WHO’s Global Strategy to Eliminate Cervical
Cancer. This set out three clear targets to meet by 2030 in order to put countries on the path to elimination:
90% of girls vaccinated with the HPV vaccine by age 15; 70% of women screened with a high-performance
test by age 35 and again at 45; 90% of women with cervical disease receiving treatment.

New evidence and opportunities to increase uptake of vaccines against human papillomavirus (HPV), which
causes most cases of cervical cancer, coupled with strengthened screening, diagnosis, and treatment
options, make this an opportune time to elevate cervical cancer elimination on global and country agendas.
As such, the Governments of Colombia and Spain have partnered with the Pan American Health
Organization; the World Health Organization; UNICEF; the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; Unitaid; the
Global Financing Facility; Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance; the United States Agency for International Development; and the World Bank to co-host this milestone forum.

For media contacts please see page 3.

MEDIA CONTACTS

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