**World Health Organization turns 75 On World Health Day**

**Ghana, 7 April 2023** – Today, on World Health Day, World Health Organization (WHO) celebrates its 75th anniversary. In 1948, countries of the world came together and founded WHO to promote health, keep the world safe and serve the vulnerable – so everyone, everywhere can attain the highest level of health and well-being.

Working with 194 Member States across six regions and on the ground in more than 150 offices, WHO envisions a world where Health for All is realized. The right to health is a basic human right that promotes health and wellbeing, dignity, and a good quality of life for everyone, despite who they are, where they live or what they do.

In Ghana, WHO has supported the country with technical and financial support in building a resilient health system that is capable of withstanding shocks. WHO has also extended support in the fight against diseases, leading to the interruption of Wild poliovirus as well as the elimination of Guinea worm, Trachoma, Human African Trypanosomiasis (sleeping sickness) and Neonatal Tetanus as public health problems. The organization has also assisted the country in the development of strategic documents such as the National Action Plan for Health Security, National strategy on non-communicable diseases including Mental Health, Comprehensive Multi-Year Plan for the Expanded Programme on Immunization and the National Innovative Health Financing Strategy.

“WHO’s 75th anniversary is an opportunity for us to reflect on the remarkable achievements of our collective efforts to advance the health and wellbeing of the people of Ghana,” says Dr Francis Kasolo, WHO Representative in Ghana. “It is also the chance for us to rally around a common agenda and strengthen our commitment to tackle emerging health challenges towards achieving health for all.”

At the heart of ‘health for all’ is the attainment of Universal Health Coverage through primary health, where people can have access to affordable, equitable, good quality and sustainable health care. In Ghana, around 36.2% of health expenditure comes out of people’s pockets and as a result, significant number of persons continue to be pushed further below the poverty line due to spending on health. National health strategies should therefore position primary health care as the entry point into a health system which not only treats ill health, but also prevents illness and promotes good health thus reducing the need for more expensive curative service.

Although Ghana has made significant progress towards achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) as demonstrated in the improvement of the country’s UHC service coverage index from 35 in 2010 to 47.8 in 2021, it is important that these gains are consolidated by adhering to Ghana’s UHC roadmap.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has rolled back the hard-won gains made in areas such as routine immunization against vaccine-preventable childhood diseases and antenatal attendance. In the past three years an estimated 21 million children have not received a single vaccine dose. In 2021 alone, the world recorded the worst decline in routine immunization in 30 years, and WHO estimates that without immediate action to catch up and get back to normal immunization coverage, the global immunisation figures will not return to pre Covid 19 levels until 2027.

In contrast to the global immunisation picture, in Ghana, 1.24 million children received the third dose of the Diphtheria-Pertussis-Tetanus (DPT) containing vaccine in 2022 compared to the 1.17 million children who received the same vaccine in 2019. This remarkable performance was achieved through concerted support provided by WHO and other partners to sustain the delivery of essential services, including immunization.

As we celebrate WHO 75 anniversary, we remain committed to working with all stakeholders to support Ghana’s health sector priorities towards achieving the highest level of health for all Ghanaians.

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