



## **Background Paper**

Committee: WHO

Topic A: Ensuring the adherence to vaccine policies and combating vaccine hesitancy

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One of the most important aspects of the quality of life is human health, which has been ensured thanks to economical and scientific advancements around the globe. An example of one these advancements are vaccines, which have reduced mortality and endemic threats to populations by eliminating and controlling infectious diseases and epidemics, or pandemics. However, a group of anti-vaccination ideologists has been causing a great menace to public health, by provoking new epidemics in many communities. The public health of many nations has been effected by outbreaks of infectious diseases that were considered almost extinguished. The anti-vax movement is one of the ten biggest threats to public health. In WHO , the main objective is to implement vaccine policies correctly and to raise awareness about the importance of immunization, by proposing defined actions. Nowadays, nations have been threatened with epidemic outbreaks on a massive scale. It is a real problem in countries like the USA, Italy, the UK, and Japan, where less than 90% of their population are immunized against VPD's (Vaccine Preventable Diseases) making them vulnerable to infections.

The anti-vaccine movement has existed since the creation of vaccines, due to the belief that such immunizations didn't actually work, and that they were dangerous. In time, vaccines became more trustworthy in the eyes of society. Still, this concern reemerged with the work of Andrew Wakefield, a doctor that published an article stating that vaccines were bad. He wrote that vaccines caused mental disorders, asthma, that they contain aluminum and mercury, and they overloaded the immune system, things that are untrue. Wakefield was stripped of his medical license, which created more followers of the anti-vax movement. Many governments have changed their laws regarding this, since it has caused epidemics in their territories.

In Europe and the USA, there is a huge epidemic outbreak of measles since anti-vaccination movement has become more popular in those regions. Also, in developing countries, there is a big vaccine hesitancy because they are unable to produce their own vaccines. The UN and the WHO are defining this as a global crisis, the SAGE organization has informed populations that vaccines are good for health and they accomplish their objective of immunization. Vaccines have never been dangerous for humanity, but anti-vaxxers continue believing they have negative side-effects to them. The UN believes this is causing a rise in the incidence of epidemics.

Since 9 out of 10 unvaccinated people get infected with measles, this is the most worrying epidemic. Countries like the UK, France, Italy, Ukraine, Russia, and the US are the nations with most cases of

measles. There are many other epidemics such as poliomyelitis, tetanus, and hepatitis A and B in countries like Japan, Poland; and in West Africa because of their economic problems. There are nations that have no clear policies concerning vaccines like the UK, Italy, and Germany due to a lack of mandatory immunization. On the other hand, countries like China, Mexico, and Belgium are the perfect examples to follow because of their great levels of immunization in their populations. Italy, Germany, Norway, Canada, and Brazil are changing their laws on vaccination as a result of the recent infectious disease outbreaks.

The UN is emphasizing finding a solution to this problem, so WHO is placing maximum priority on solving the issue. The TIP (Tailoring Immunized Programs) was a marketing action that emphasized promoting confidence in vaccines, which was mainly used in Europe. The SAGE Working Group had 3 main points: changing the population's mind on immunization programs, proving the security of vaccination's core elements and their structure, and to create a conscious analysis of the threats VPD's present to society. Thanks to the efforts to solve this problem, and the pressure imposed by the UN, parliaments around the world have changed their programs and passed acts to secure the immunization of children. Some examples of this are England, the US, and Japan.

In conclusion, vaccines are important for the human body since they help to fight against bacteria and debilitating or life threatening viruses. Vaccines may contain a bit of aluminum and mercury, but the body has the capacity to support those amounts. Also, there are more of those toxins in what we consume in food, and in our daily lives than vaccines have. Vaccination has been part of a wider social movement in the world, and there are many factors which can change the decision to have a vaccination. Doubts about vaccines have created controversy that affects the acceptance of getting the jabs. This has been a very important problem to solve for the WHO ministers from 194 countries, who have endorsed a resolution called the Global Vaccine Action Plan (GVAP). This plan would ensure that everyone will receive a vital immunization by 2020, but in 2015 more than 19 million missed the basic immunization. As a resolution, they have to improve surveillance and monitoring systems to make sure up-to-date data guidelines advance the impact and performance of the vaccine programs.

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