



## TOP NEWS OF THE MONTH

Eswatini Prime Minister  
applauds WHO's contribution  
on road safety

Eswatini reaches over 46 000  
girls with HPV vaccine

Ministry of Health opens blood  
bank in Hlatikhulu

WHO supports comprehensive  
labour market analysis



## ESWATINI PM APPLAUDS WHO'S CONTRIBUTION ON ROAD SAFETY

Eswatini Prime Minister His Excellency Cleopas Dlamini has applauded the World Health Organization (WHO) for its contribution towards improving road safety.

The PM said this during the launch of the first Eswatini National Road Safety Strategy 2023–2030 in Manzini on 29 June 2023. “WHO has demonstrated that indeed they have taken the baton of Road Safety Lead Agency in the UN family from WHO International and as assigned by United Nations,” he said. Dlamini noted that WHO has continued to assist in road safety activities since the launch of the 2nd Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021 – 2030 last year. Among other activities, WHO Eswatini has helped in building capacity for the Road Safety Council, conducted stakeholder consultations on the development of the National Road Safety Strategy, data collection and validation for Eswatini’s data for the Global Status Report on Road Safety 2023, supported a validation of the National Road Safety Strategy and supported a capacity development exercise for eight officers to become Road Safety Auditors.

The 2nd Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021 – 2030’s target is to reduce road traffic deaths and injuries by 50% by 2030. To achieve this target, governments and partners were called upon to implement an integrated “Safe Systems Approach” to road safety. The Safe System Approach anticipates and accommodates human errors; incorporates road design as well as vehicle design that limit crash impact to levels within human tolerance to prevent death or serious injury. It also motivates those who design and maintain the roads, manufacture vehicles, and administer safety programmes to share responsibility for safety with road users, so that when a crash occurs, remedies are sought throughout the system, rather than solely blaming the driver or other road users. It also provides for commitment to proactive and continuous improvement of roads and vehicles so that the entire system is made safe.



His Excellency the Right Honorable Prime Minister Cleopas Dlamini making his keynote address during the official launch of the National Road Safety Strategy



UNESWA Registrar Dr. Salebona Simelane and Road Safety Council Chairperson Dr. Fortunate Shabalala sign as witnesses endorsing the MoU establishing the Center of Excellence on Road Safety

One of the proponents of the Decade of Action on Road Safety is the formulation of clear national strategies on how the reduction of road traffic deaths and serious injuries shall be attained. The PM said it was thus, pleasing to gather this year to pronounce a road map for improving road safety in

the Kingdom of Eswatini through the first national strategy on road safety, whose vision is to “Eliminate fatal and serious injury on Eswatini’s roads by 2063”.

Dlamini noted that whilst the target for the period is to reduce fatal and serious injuries by half by 2030, there is need to consider zero fatalities and serious injuries. “This is achievable,” he said adding that this ambitious vision is backed by the fact that all fatal and serious injuries on the road are preventable.

He further urged all Emaswati to ensure that these targets are met, adding that in that way the country can retain all critical skills required and develop faster. In 2021, Eswatini recorded a total of 7294 road traffic accidents resulting in 229 fatalities and 705 serious injuries. Currently, the age group of 15–49 is the most affected by road deaths and serious injuries.

The strategy has exposed all prevailing issues that currently make the country’s efforts short of achieving the road safety targets. These include among others, obsolete motor vehicle and driver licensing and regulatory systems which affect the safety of all road users, suspect behaviour of road users who fail to comply with traffic rules and regulations, insufficient traffic law enforcement, as well as road construction that does not cater for all users including non-motorised transport.

The strategy identifies two broad directions to address these issues, and these include institutional and legislative strengthening as well as operational directions to improve road safety. A well-resourced road safety lead agency will be established which shall have cross functional coordinating capabilities. Further, legislation shall be reviewed to contribute towards addressing the critical issues identified by the strategy during the formulation process.

“Once the institutional strengthening is completed, then operational plans by all road safety stakeholders shall be

implemented to achieve the targets earmarked for this strategy. This operational phase is planned to have commenced by 2026,” Dlamini said.

He highlighted foundational progress towards improvement of road safety such as the passing of the Roads Agency Bill of 2022. We expect regular road safety assessments determining risk areas and such to be addressed proactively.

He further applauded that contribution from the private sector including Municipalities, the academia as well as support from development partners both in the country and continentally including the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) who led the development of the strategy and The Africa Transport Policy Program (SSATP), a division of the World Bank, which started this process under their Development Pillar 3 Program towards the end of 2019.

Speaking at the launch, UN Resident Coordinator Mr George Wachira commended the Minister of Public Works and Transport for his leadership in advocating for safety on the country’s roads. The RC reiterated that the strategy puts emphasis on building professional road safety capacity and leadership, investing in strategic information and research and strengthening post-crash response. He mentioned that delays in detecting and providing care for those involved in a road traffic crash increase the severity of injuries.

“As the UN, we are committed to supporting Eswatini to implement the strategy. We stand with the government, the ministry and all stakeholders towards ensuring that the strategy is diligently implemented towards the vision of eliminating fatalities,” he said.



UNESWA Vice Chancellor Prof. Justice Thwala and PS Thulani Mkhaliphi display the signed MoU between the university and the Ministry of Public Works and Transport during the launch of the Eswatini National Road Safety Strategy 2023-2030.



WHO Representative Dr Susan Tembo and Mr. Placide Badji from UNECA following proceedings during the launch

# ESWATINI REACHES OVER 46 000 GIRLS WITH HPV VACCINE



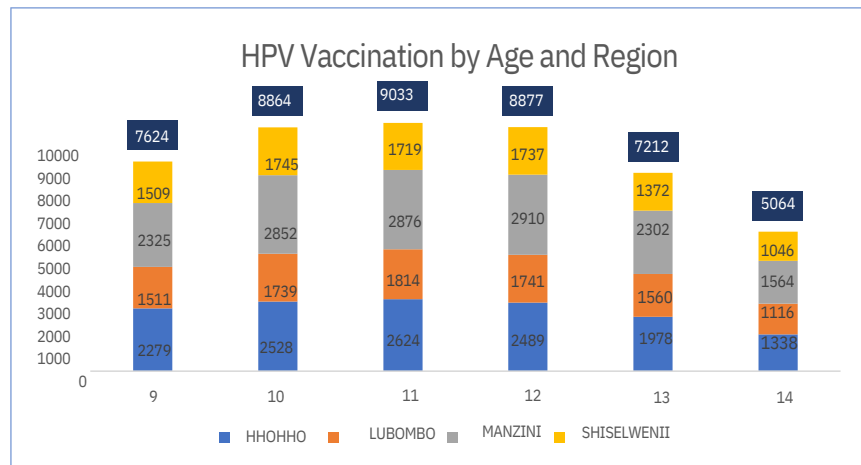
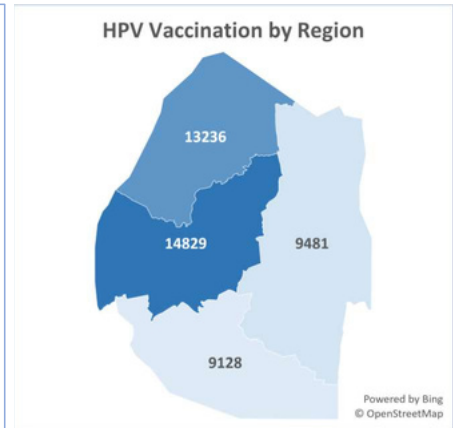
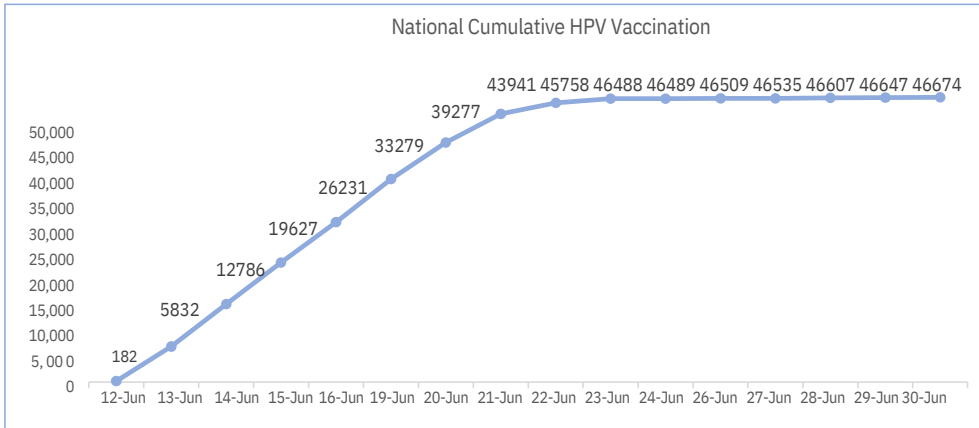
Ministry of Health

## HPV Vaccination Campaign, 12-30 June 2023

Females aged 9-14 years

National Vaccination: 46,674

National Coverage: 56.1%



The Ministry of Health has completed the HPV vaccination campaign, reaching over 46 674 girls between the ages 9-14 years.

The campaign was launched by Her Royal Highness Inkhosikati LaMatsebula on 12 June 2023 and ended on 30 June 2023. A total of 84 teams of Nurses visited schools around the country and other community centres to cater for out of schoolgirls. The campaign targeted about 79 000 young girls. The campaign was supported by the World Health Organization (WHO), who provided both technical and

financial support, UNICEF, CDC, PEPFAR and MSD. HPV is a virus that causes cancers, mainly of the reproductive system, including cervical cancer. Cervical cancer is the leading cancer among women ages 15-49 years in Eswatini, fuelled by the high numbers of HIV cases. Eswatini records approximately 360 cases of cervical cancer each year and 27% of these cases die. Currently, a total of 2 129 women are living with cancer in the Kingdom. In the last five years, 771 women have died due to cancer related illness.

When launching the campaign, the Inkhosikati emphasized that “vaccinating our girls, in line with the WHO recommendation, helps us to prevent HPV infection and thus, reduce the cancer incidence among our people.”

The campaign was well received by teachers and parents who consented for their children to vaccinate. However, there were some misconceptions which resulted in vaccine refusals, which propels the Ministry of Health to provide more education to both parents and children.

## MINISTRY OF HEALTH OPENS BLOOD BANK IN HLATIKHULU



Pupils from schools around Hlatikhulu joined the march across town to raise awareness about World Blood Donor Day

The Ministry of Health has opened a blood bank in Hlatikhulu Government Hospital. This is the first blood bank to be opened in the Shsielweni region. Previously, blood donors had to travel to Mbabane and Manzini to donate blood.

The Hlatikhulu blood bank was opened during the World Blood Donor Day commemoration at the hospital on Saturday. World Blood Donor Day is commemorated annually on the 14th of June but this year, the Ministry of Health set June 17 for the commemoration. The purpose of celebrating this day is to raise awareness of safe blood and blood products, such as plasma. It is also a day to celebrate and thank voluntary, unpaid blood donors for their gift of life - blood.

The theme for this year's campaign is "Give blood, give plasma, share life, share often." This theme underlines the role every person can play by regularly giving the valuable gift of blood to create a safe and sustainable supply of blood and blood products that can always be available to needy patients.

Speaking during the event, Director of Health Services Dr Velephi Okello said they were grateful for the opening of the blood bank in Shiselweni since this will cut on time and travelling costs for blood donors. This will also ensure that the hospital has blood available for patients who need it instead of placing an order in Mbabane or Manzini for blood. She said this delayed the process of

transfusing blood to patients who urgently needed blood, thus results in deaths. Dr Okello said the country needs to increase the number of people who voluntarily donate blood. She noted that in recent days, people would send an SOS to relatives to donate blood for someone who is hospitalised and needs blood transfusion. She said the aim of the blood bank is to keep blood so that it is readily available for those who are hospitalised and need blood transfusion. "As the Ministry of Health, we remain committed to ensure that quality standards for blood and blood products are adhered to. We remain committed to follow all the guidelines and protocols to ensure that the people of Eswatini receive safe blood that will save their lives," she said.



Director of Health Services Dr Velephi Okello making her keynote address during the World Blood Donor Day commemoration

## ...MORE MOTHERS DIE DUE TO LOSS BLOOD DURING DELIVERY- WHO

Obstetric haemorrhage, which is the loss of blood during delivery remains a major cause of direct maternal death especially in poorly resourced settings.

Speaking during the commemoration of World Blood Donor Day at Hlatikhulu Hospital on Saturday, the World Health organization (WHO) Emergency Preparedness and Response Officer Dr Lonkululeko Khumalo said numerous studies conducted across the globe showed that there is a direct association between maternal deaths and lack of blood transfusions. Other quantitative studies showed that overall, 26% (16-72%) of maternal haemorrhage deaths were due to lack of blood. Reasons included lack of blood donors, unwillingness of relatives to donate and inadequate supplies and transport. Dr Khumalo said this can be avoided if sufficient quantities of blood and blood products were available timeously at the blood bank.

“Safe and sufficient quantities of blood and blood products should always be available to prevent deaths due to road traffic accidents, acute and chronic anaemias, maternal and neonatal deaths due to haemorrhage. We must address persistent challenges to ensure sustainable access to safe and quality-assured blood and blood products for needy patients. Through our collaborative efforts, we must raise adequate and sustainable funding and increase blood donation rates,” she emphasised.

Dr Khumalo said, while increasing the number of blood donors, countries should also remember the health of blood donors. She said WHO in the African Region would like to focus on donor health and the quality of donor care as critical factors in building donor commitment and a willingness to donate regularly.

“WHO call on Ministry of Health, government, partners, and all stakeholders to mobilize support at national and regional levels to invest in strengthening and sustaining blood programs. As WHO, we are ready and available to continue supporting the interventions of the Ministry of Health in ensuring sustainable access to safe and quality-assured blood and blood products for needy patients,” she said.



WHO HPR Officer Dr Lonkululeko Khumalo delivering remarks on behalf of the WR during the World Blood Donor Day commemoration



One of the people from Salem High School donating blood



The pupils wearing t-shirts with the day's theme



Blood donation infused into theatre

## UN ESWATINI STAFF COMMEMORATE WORLD BLOOD DONOR DAY



WHO Health Systems Strengthening Officer Dr Mekdim Ayana preparing to donate blood



UN Resident Coordinator Mr. George Wachira donating blood

Staff of the United Nations (UN) in Eswatini have once again join the commemoration of World Blood Donor Day. Commemoration of the World Blood Donor Day globally started in May 2005, during the Fifty-Eighth World Health Assembly, where ministers of health from across the world designated World Blood Donor Day as an annual event to be held each year on 14 June.

The UN staff, has for the past seven years commemorated this day by donating blood to save lives of the people of Eswatini. The United Nations in Eswatini has over 100 staff from seven resident UN agencies including UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, WFP, IOM and UNAIDS, and two non-resident agencies: FAO and UNESCO. The UN's role during this activity is to encourage staff to donate blood as a means to share life and also appreciate UN staff for the yearly blood donations.

The slogan for 2023 World Blood Donor Day campaign is "Give blood, give plasma, share life, share often." Addressing UN staff, World Health Organization (WHO) Representative Dr Susan Tembo said the theme focuses on patients requiring life-long transfusion support and underlines the role every single person can play, by giving the valuable gift of blood or plasma. It also highlights the importance of giving blood or plasma regularly to create a safe and sustainable supply of blood and blood products that can be always available, so that all patients in need can receive timely treatment.

Transfusion of blood and blood products save millions of lives every year. Blood and blood products are essential components in the proper management of women suffering from bleeding associated with pregnancy and

childbirth; children suffering from severe anaemia due to malaria and malnutrition; patients with blood and bone marrow disorders, inherited disorders of haemoglobin and immune deficiency conditions; victims of trauma, emergencies, disasters and accidents; as well as patients undergoing advanced medical and surgical procedures.

The Eswatini National Blood Transfusion Services (ENBTS) visited the UN building where they conducted health education on the importance of donating blood. Gugu Maphalala, the ENBTS manager encouraged staff to donate blood often so that the blood bank has enough blood to save those in need. She mentioned that after the decline in blood donation caused by the COVID pandemic, things were slowly taking shape, and they were seeing more Emaswati to come to donate blood.

Speaking during the same event, UN Resident Coordinator George Wachira commended UN staff for making it a culture to donate blood. He noted that for the past years UN staff has been donating the precious gift of blood. He encouraged staff to stay healthy in order to be eligible to donate blood.



Staff from the Eswatini National Blood Transfusion Services during the UN blood donation exercise

## ESWATINI CONDUCTS COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH LABOUR MARKET ANALYSIS

The Ministry of health, with support from the World Health Organization (WHO) has conducted a comprehensive health labour market analysis which looks at the number of health workers required to address the current disease burden.

Dr James Avoka Asamani, a consultant from the WHO Regional office was in the country last week to help with the exercise. He was leading a team of over 30 health workers to conduct the analysis which seeks to understand the supply of health workers in the country - which is the number of health workers that the country is training and are willing to work in the country.

Speaking during an interview, Dr Asamani said the aim was to track what is currently happening, what happened in the past and also make a projection for the future. The second component of the analysis was to ascertain the demand for health workers, which looks at the capacity of the country to employ and maintain health workers. In doing that, Dr Asamani said they would look at the financial position of the country as well as the prioritization- how many workers the country can feasibly employ.

The third component is a need analysis, which looks at the health needs of the population. This component looks at how many health workers are needed to keep the population healthy. In doing that, the team did a need for health services and transfer that need to the need for health care workers. "We look at the disease burden of the country, the risk factors that cause morbidity and mortality and we are using that to calculate how many people will be in need of health services. We are also looking at the standards that are used for addressing the disease burden," Dr Asamani said. This exercise required the matching for every disease and every risk factor as well as the cadres required to provide the intervention and what kind of intervention is needed.

"We will estimate how many people need what kind of health services and how many health workers are required to deliver it. We will then compare this need with the demand and the capacity to employ and also the supply. In the event there is a mismatch we will have a policy dialogue to agree on the feasible and contextually appropriate way to address those mismatches."

From the disease burden analysis, the team noted that so far there has been a significant shift from communicable to Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs).



The Ministry of Health team posing with partners and WHO Health workforce team lead Dr James Avoka Asaman (front row, second from right)



The team doing group work during the exercise

The team compared diseases that used to be the main problem in the country from 2010 and discovered that HIV which used to be the one that kill people is no longer the direct cause of mortality. What was noted is that people now live longer.

"We are beginning to see a rise in cancers, respiratory infections, diabetes and hypertension. We are seeing a slight shift from predominantly infectious diseases to NCDs. With this analysis, we will be able to quantify how much of that shift has taken place and how that shift will likely occur in the future," Dr Asamani noted, adding that the health workforce previously was capacitated to address infectious diseases, with a lot of emphasis on addressing the HIV and TB burden. He added that, while this capacity is still required, not a lot of capacity was built in the area of addressing NCDs. "So going forward we hope the analysis will give us better insights to advise the government to plan accordingly to accommodate the shift in disease burden, which may also require slight changes in how the model of healthcare is in the country."



## WHO ACKNOWLEDGES DONOR PARTNERSHIPS FOR BETTER HEALTH OF EMASWATI

The WHO Eswatini country office remains committed to ensuring more Emaswati benefit from universal health coverage, are better protected from health emergencies, and continue to enjoy better health and well-being.

Partner support and collaboration are at the center of this in order to achieve the aforementioned health goals. WHO Eswatini continues to technically support the Ministry of Health to respond to the country's health needs. Partner and donor support continues to stream in but more still needs to be done to improve the health systems in the country.

Donor support has enabled the country to improve on scientific work, field programmes, health goals, policy and behavioural change for better health. However, some key priority areas still remain underfunded and bridging this gap by increasing funding will allow for the technical team in the country to better strategies on how to improve the health system in the country.

All in all, the country office would like to thank all partners and donors for the immense flow of financial and technical support offered in different capacities. The country gets better through you and for that we say SIYABONGA KAKHULU.



World Vision National Director Tinah Mukunda (far left in red) paid a courtesy call to the WHO Representative Dr Susan Tembo (second from right) at the WHO office to discuss areas of potential collaboration. WHO and World Vision have a longstanding relationship across the continent and employing this in the country level would increase efforts towards improving the health and well-being of Emaswati.



Technical teams from Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture and other health partners in the country working on the Pandemic Fund Proposal. Eswatini is currently mobilizing resources for different health sectors i.e. laboratory strengthening that remains highly underfunded

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD),
- The Global Fund
- Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework (UBRAF)

- UNICEF
- United Nations Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP)
- Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework (UBRAF)
- UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF)
- United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office in Eswatini
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
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