Background and context:

Vaccination is one of the most successful public health measures of modern times. In fact, according to a recent World Health Organization (WHO) report on the prevention of infectious diseases, it is second only to clean water.[i] Vaccination prevents an estimated 2.5 million deaths worldwide each year and reduces disease-specific treatment costs.[ii]

We need to shift the balance from treating disease to preventing it at all stages of life. The WHO states that vaccination has an important role to play in prevention and is a key component of healthy ageing. Further, investing in vaccines saves time, money and lives, and leads to healthier, sustainable healthcare systems and communities.[iii]

The Immunisation for All Ages Initiative is working to improve the uptake rates of immunisation throughout life globally. We believe that to do this, efforts in support of a life-course approach to immunisation must be strengthened through strategic alignment with other major international agendas.

We urge investment in health system infrastructure and a greater focus on prevention policy that supports immunisation at all stages of life. We seek consideration for a renewed focus by governments to meet existing targets for immunisation. We seek consideration that there are consistent and equitable vaccination targets of 90% throughout life.

We call upon national and international health and advocacy organisations and governments to:

1. Prioritise immunisation throughout life as a key pillar of expanded prevention strategies and a central component of universal health coverage.

2. Remove barriers to access for appropriate immunisation throughout life to ensure all people are protected and no one is left behind.

3. Reduce inequalities in the timely, appropriate and affordable access to immunisation throughout life.
Call to Action 1: Prioritise prevention

Prioritise immunisation throughout life as a key pillar of expanded prevention strategies and a central component of universal health coverage.

- Require appropriate immunisation for healthcare professionals and allied health professionals as a part of their duty of care.
- Increase investment on prevention and, within that, increase the proportion of investment on immunisation.
- Recognise the broader societal and economic benefits of immunisation at all stages of life.
- Recognise the importance of protecting those who are at increased risk of morbidity from infectious diseases due to exacerbation of an underlying non-communicable disease.
- Increase the focus on the importance of vaccines as a defence against antimicrobial resistance (AMR) reducing the burden of infectious diseases thus reducing the requirement for antibiotics.
- Increase public confidence in vaccines by driving health-seeking behaviour and communicating the value of immunisation to the public through trusted stakeholders (such as healthcare professionals and allied health professionals).

Call to Action 2: Ensure access for all

Remove barriers to access for appropriate immunisation throughout life to ensure all people are protected and no one is left behind.

- Expand the infrastructure for immunisation beyond the traditional pathways to facilitate and increase access to vaccination services, including pharmacies and other appropriate primary health care facilities.
- Reduce the time to making a vaccine available by implementing more efficient and responsive approval and recommendation processes.
- Ensure healthcare professionals across disciplines are well-trained, informed and upskilled on vaccine benefits and the administration to deliver the message out to hard-to-reach groups.

Call to Action 3: Reduce inequity

Reduce inequalities in timely, appropriate and affordable access to immunisation throughout life.

- Reduce inequalities in marginalised and hard-to-reach sub-populations by ensuring immunisation schedules take into consideration the needs and specificities including: gender, culture and rural, urban and refugee populations.
- Ensure existing vaccine uptake targets are met and strive for parity of such targets across the life course.
- Ensure National Immunization Technical Advisory Groups include appropriate representation, such as patient groups and civil society, and reform where necessary.
