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## Background Information

Immunization is defined by The World Health Organization as “the process whereby a person is made immune or resistant to an infectious disease, typically by the administration of a vaccine. Vaccines stimulate the body’s own immune system to protect the person against subsequent infection or disease “.

Vaccination has become an inherent tool in averting deadly diseases and their overall decline mainly in this century. But recently, the world has been seeing a visible decline of immunization which can be very dangerous for the future of our society and can lead to outbreaks of diseases which we can currently regard as eradicated, meaning eliminated and removed or suppressed and unable to spread in case of a rare sudden appearance within an individual.

The World Health Organization (WHO) suggests that vaccination prevents 2-3 million deaths each year. This number unfortunately could be dropping to a lower rate, partially for the reason that a theory linking vaccines and autism was spread and of course worried parents all over the world. The theory was shortly debunked by scientists and medical experts but the decline on immunization still continues to increase.

Another reasoning could come from insufficient knowledge about the positive effect vaccination programs had on public health. Today’s generations didn’t experience huge epidemics affecting thousands of children each year and therefore are not aware of endangering their own children by not vaccinating them.

## UN Involvement

The World Health Organization (WHO) covers the topic of vaccination very thoroughly<sup>1</sup>. It contains general and technical information about different aspects of immunization, policies for combatting diseases and recommended strategies of their eradication. WHO also publishes data and statistics concerning vaccines from all around the world.

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) is also very engaged in spreading awareness regarding the dangers of under immunization and the effects.

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The Global Vaccine Action Plan developed and conducted by WHO and UNICEF is the biggest global immunization strategy endorsed by 194 Member States of the World Health Assembly, which is composed of Ministers of Health, in 2012. The current plan is in action since 2011, ending in 2020, and according to its reports from the end of 2018 it showed to be very successful. The new plan of action will be valid from 2021 to 2030 and is said to outsize its precursor.

Seeing as the decline of immunization around the world is a very complicated and important matter, there have been a few UN Resolutions passed by the World Health Assembly mainly in the last two decades.

### Questions to consider

- What stance does your country have towards vaccination? What about popular belief? Where does it originate from? What are the vaccination rates?
- What vaccines are obligatory? Why?
- Does your country have any problems with diseases spreading in correlation with low immunization of its population?

### Sources and Useful Links

- Some helpful data - <https://ourworldindata.org/vaccination> (3.12.2019)
- Factual Information to help you understand vaccines - <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/conversations/downloads/vacsafe-understand-color-office.pdf> (3.12.2019)
- <sup>1</sup> WHO Coverage - <https://www.who.int/topics/immunization/en/> (3.12.2019)
- <sup>2</sup> UNICEF Coverage - <https://www.unicef.org/immunization/unicef-action> (3.12.2019)