

Recent news from WHO

- On 26 October, the World Health Organization (WHO) launched a **mass polio vaccination** campaign across Africa to reach 72 million children in 15 countries. During the week-long campaign of mass immunization, a total of some 290 000 vaccinators were mobilized to go door-to-door to deliver two drops of oral polio vaccine to every child aged less than five years in areas considered at highest risk of polio transmission. The campaign will cost approximately US\$ 42.6 million and is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, United States Agency for International Development, Rotary International, United Nations Children's Fund and the Governments of Germany and Japan.
- **World Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Day** was held on 17 November to broaden understanding of the illness and advocate for better care for patients. Currently 210 million people have chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and it is predicted to become the third leading cause of death worldwide by 2030. Key risk factors are tobacco smoking, indoor and outdoor air pollution, and exposure to occupational dusts and chemicals.
- **World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims** was held on 21 November. Road traffic crashes kill nearly 1.3 million people every year and injure or disable as many as 50 million more. They are the leading cause of death among young people aged 10–24 years. WHO and the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration encourage governments to commemorate this day to draw attention to road traffic crashes, their consequences, costs and prevention.
- The **International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women** is held every year on 25 November. The day launches 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence, which runs through to 10 December, Human Rights Day. At least one in every three women has been beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused in her lifetime – and the abuser is usually someone known to her.
- **World AIDS Day** on 1 December draws together people from around the world to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS and demonstrate international solidarity in the face of the pandemic. There are now 33.4 million people living with HIV, according to 2008 figures. An estimated 2.7 million were newly infected with the virus and 2 million died of AIDS the same year. Sub-Saharan Africa remains the region most heavily affected with 67% of the world's HIV infections worldwide, 91% of new HIV infections among children and 72% of the world's AIDS-related deaths.

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