



## MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release

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Host Media Contacts: See page 3

### **Inaugural *Global Cervical Cancer Elimination Forum: Advancing the Call to Action* to catalyze momentum and commitments on worldwide movement to eliminate cervical cancer**

**WHAT:** First global forum on elimination of cervical cancer — the **fourth most common** cancer in women worldwide. The [Forum](#) brings together senior ministry officials with leading global health and development agencies, donors, academia, civil society, and others to galvanize the global movement to eliminate cervical cancer. This requires accelerated progress on the three goals set out in the World Health Organization (WHO) [agenda](#) of vaccination, screening, and treatment to reach:

- 90% of girls vaccinated with the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine by age 15
- 70% of women screened with a high-performance test by age 35 and again at 45
- 90% of women with cervical disease receiving treatment

Participants will announce new and ambitious commitments — financial, policy, and programmatic — to advance the cervical cancer elimination agenda and accelerate the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 3 (health and well-being for all).

**WHEN:** 5-7 March 2024

- Press conference & opening ceremony: Tuesday, 5 March at 4pm EST
  - Live stream will be available and will be recorded (see [event website](#) for updates on timing/access to livestream)

**WHO:** Senior government officials, leading global health and development agencies, donors, civil society, and others. Speakers at the press conference to include:

- **Dr. Gina Tambini, Representative of PAHO/ WHO in Colombia (Moderator)**
- **Hon. Dr. Guillermo Alfonso Jaramillo Martínez, Minister of Health and Social Protection, Colombia**
- **Hon. Khumbize Kandodo Chiponda, Minister of Health, Government of Malawi**
- **Mr. Antón Leis García, Chief Executive Officer of AECID**

- **Dr. Bente Mikkelsen, Director, Noncommunicable Diseases, WHO**
- **Ms. Aurélia Nguyen, Chief Programme Officer at Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance**
- **Ms. Theo Sowa, Interim CEO/Director of the Graca Machel Trust**

**WHERE:** Training Center of the Spanish Cooperation  
Cl. 36 #2-74, El Centro, Cartagena de Indias,  
Provincia de Cartagena, Bolívar, Colombia  
[Register](#) to request media credentials to attend in-person or to receive live stream information. Space in Cartagena is limited.

**WHY:** A woman dies [every two minutes](#) of cervical cancer, an entirely preventable disease. The knowledge, tools, and opportunity exist to eliminate this form of cancer and save millions of lives. But barriers and inequities in the hardest hit areas remain unacceptably high: [of the estimated 348,000 women who died of cervical cancer in 2022, 90% are from low- and middle-income countries \(LMICs\)](#).

Cervical cancer is one of only a few cancers that can be prevented by a vaccine. Vaccination against HPV — the leading cause of cervical cancer — is a proven path to elimination. Yet due to supply constraints, delivery challenges and the pandemic, just [one in five](#) adolescent girls has been vaccinated. While vaccination coverage is improving thanks to concerted efforts from countries and partners, uptake is too low, leaving thousands of adolescent girls and women vulnerable to developing cervical cancer. The [WHO's recommendation](#) of a one-dose HPV vaccine opens new opportunities to reach more girls worldwide and will significantly reduce costs and logistical barriers.

HPV screening and treatment is also critical to saving lives. Yet despite there being cost-effective and evidence-based tools for screening and treatment, fewer than [5% of women in LMICs](#) are ever screened for cervical cancer. Major progress can be made by integrating cervical cancer services into existing primary health care delivery.

**Annual deaths from cervical cancer will likely reach [410,000 by 2030](#) if we do not change course.** This forum is a pivotal moment and a historic step in securing commitments to eliminate, for the first time ever, a cancer globally.

### ***About the Global Cervical Cancer Elimination Forum***

The inaugural [“Global Cervical Cancer Elimination Forum: Advancing the Call to Action,”](#) taking place March 5-7, 2024, in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, will catalyze governments, donors, civil society and others to recommit to the cervical cancer elimination agenda and to inspire country-level engagement. The Forum offers a watershed moment for the world to collectively accelerate progress on a ground breaking promise made in 2020, when nearly 200 countries signed on to the WHO’s [Global Strategy to Eliminate Cervical Cancer](#). This set out three clear targets to meet by 2030 in order to put countries on the path to elimination: 90% of girls vaccinated with the HPV vaccine by age 15; 70% of women screened with a high-performance test by age 35 and again at 45; 90% of women with cervical disease receiving treatment.

New evidence and opportunities to increase uptake of vaccines against human papillomavirus (HPV), which causes most cases of cervical cancer, coupled with strengthened screening, diagnosis, and treatment options, make this an opportune time to elevate cervical cancer elimination on global and country agendas. As such, the Governments of Colombia and Spain have partnered with the Pan American Health Organization; the World Health Organization; UNICEF; the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; Unitaid; the

Global Financing Facility; Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance; the United States Agency for International Development; and the World Bank to co-host this milestone forum.

For media contacts please see page 3.

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