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Global immunization coverage reaches 84 percent : WHO

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Singapore: According to the new estimates by WHO and UNICEF, 84 percent of the world's children have been vaccinated in 2013, to protect them from deadly diseases. The statistics also revealed that 21.8 million infants still remained uncovered by the immunization program.

The figures suggested that the expanded program for immunization was a success with 111 million children receiving vaccination. The percentage of children receiving immunization have grown from 73 percent in 2000 to 84 percent in 2013.

However, the figures are still short of the target set by Global Vaccine Action Plan aiming to cover 90 percent of global children through immunization programs. Mr Michel Zaffran, coordinator of WHO's Expanded Program on Immunization, said that there is a challenge in filling the gap between 84 to 90 percent.

He added that though individual countries are taking measures to ensure 100 percent success of vaccination programs in their mandates, the process is not very effective in reaching the remote areas.

Mr Zaffran mentioned that misinformation and lack of awareness about vaccination in few countries is also a major hindrance in achieving global success.

Three of WHO's regions reported very high immunization coverage namely, the Western Pacific with 96 percent; the European Region with 96 percent; and the Region of the Americas with 90 percent.

Coverage was slightly lower in the Eastern Mediterranean Region at 82 percent; in the South-East Asia Region at 77 percent; and in the African Region at 75 percent.