

## NEWS

# UNICEF To Address Concern Over Shortage Of DTP Vaccine

By Chukwuma Muanya

## NATIONAL

**T**HE shortage of Diphtheria, Pertussis and Tetanus (DPT) for routine immunisation at primary healthcare centres across the country has been blamed on the planned introduction of a pentavalent version that takes care of DPT and hepatitis B and haemophilus influenza B (HIB) into the national vaccination schedule for 2012.

Unlike the Bacillus Calmette-Guérin (or Bacille Calmette-Guérin, BCG), the vaccine against tuberculosis, of which the country has two million doses to address the shortage, at least six million doses of DPT would be needed to bridge the gap.

The planned introduction by the Federal Government, through the National Primary Health Care Development

They now produce more of the pentavalent vaccine, of which Nigeria is yet to benefit.

*The Guardian* reliably gathered that the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) has promised to help the country ensure that it receives enough DPT until pentavalent vaccines are introduced next year.

The Federal Government has also received a conditional approval from GAVI to introduce pneumococcal vaccine (for pneumonia) to address the 15 to 17 per cent of under five mortality and morbidity caused by the bacterium.

The GAVI Alliance (formerly the "Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation") is a public-private global health partnership committed to saving children's lives and protecting people's

World Health Organisation, UNICEF, the World Bank, the vaccine industry in both industrialised and developing countries, research and technical agencies, civil society, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and other private philanthropists.

Minister of State for Health, Prof. Muhammad Ali Pate, in an exclusive interview with *The Guardian*, said UNICEF has assured Nigeria that it will facilitate the delivery of vaccine. He said the shortage of DPT is not peculiar to Nigeria.

"The shortage of DPT, maybe because of the introduction of pentavalent vaccine, is made up of five different vaccines including DPT. This has affected the demand for DPT. The low demand has affected the production.

"Nigeria plans to introduce pentavalent vaccine. But

introducing some new vaccines and we have got the approval of GAVI to do this introduction. First of all, Nigeria is in the plan for the introduction of the meningococcal A conjugate vaccine (MACV) in the third quarter of this year.

"The MACV is an improved form of vaccine against CSM. The CSM organism has so many serotypes but the serotype that causes the biggest problem in our environment, about 85 per cent of the cases, is the type A.

"Because of the burden of CSM in the meningitis belt, African health ministers, under a decade ago, approached the World Health Organisation (WHO) and partners to help solve the problem and combat meningococcal meningitis. WHO and partners with fund-

## BORNO

### Boko Haram: Gunmen Kill Prison Guard, Policeman • Auto Crash Claims 10

**T**WO suspected *Boko Haram* gunmen have shot and killed 39-year-old Abba Jato, a prison guard in Abaganaram ward of Maiduguri metropolis, Borno State, at about 8pm on Thursday.

Confirming the killing, Comptroller of Prisons, Usman Kaina Maina, said: "We received the report last night, where two suspects with a Kalashnikov rifle, attacked the residence of our prison officer and shot him in the chest and on head on Thursday."

He said the killing of Jato, brings to seven the total number of prison guards and officials killed by suspected *Boko Haram* sect members in Maiduguri.

The Commissioner Police, Simeone Midenda, however, told *The Guardian* that the prisons authorities are yet to submit a report to the police on how the guard was killed.

Meanwhile, a week after 14

people lost their lives in an oil truck crash at Ngelzarma, 10 people were again killed in separate auto crashes on Thursday along the Potiskum-Fika road and the Bayamari junction on Damaturu-Gashua road in Yobe State.

The state's Sector Commander of the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), Maitzumah Gwani disclosed that the bodies were deposited at the General Hospital, Potiskum.

Suspected *Boko Haram* gunmen also trailed Corporal Maliki Audu to his Gomari Airport residence in Maiduguri at about 7.45pm on Friday night and shot him dead before his wife.

Confirming the killing, on Saturday, Midenda said: "For a two-month period, there were no killings of officers or attacks and at our police stations until last night's killing of Maliki."

—Njadvava Musa, Maiduguri