Reviewer's report

Title: A Mid-Term Assessment of Progress Towards the Immunisation Coverage Goal of the Global Immunisation Vision and Strategy (GIVS)

Version: 1 Date: 28 September 2011

Reviewer: Zulfiqar A Bhutta

Reviewer's report:

This is an important and straightforward paper reporting global coverage of EPI immunizations (DTP3 and Measles 1) using UNICEF and WHO data bases. The reported coverage gaps and status are also consistent with what has been reported previously under other monitoring processes such as Countdown, which also use the same data bases.

The paper would be much improved if the authors

1. Could provide a panel describing the veracity of the WHO and UNICEF coverage data, its differences from routine immunization coverage reports from countries as well as comparison with alternative sources of information, such as DHS surveys. The latter were used to compare routine immunization reporting some years ago and major discrepancies pointed. Some discussion of these data sources and derivations is provided (as reference 2) but a panel indicating methods and limitations would greatly help.

2. It would be good to see sub-national data wherever feasible. The net aggregate coverage masks huge differentials and inequities. There is a cursory mention of the latter but no evidence as to distribution and differentials, such as urban rural divide, special populations at-risk and coverage by education standards or income quintiles.

3. Lastly, it would have greatly helped to see the progress in vaccinations or the converse in relation to health system performance indicators as well as progress in child survival by country. Table 1 could have greatly benefited from a column indicating progress in reducing child mortality over the same period

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests except that I am a member of AGE commiteee