

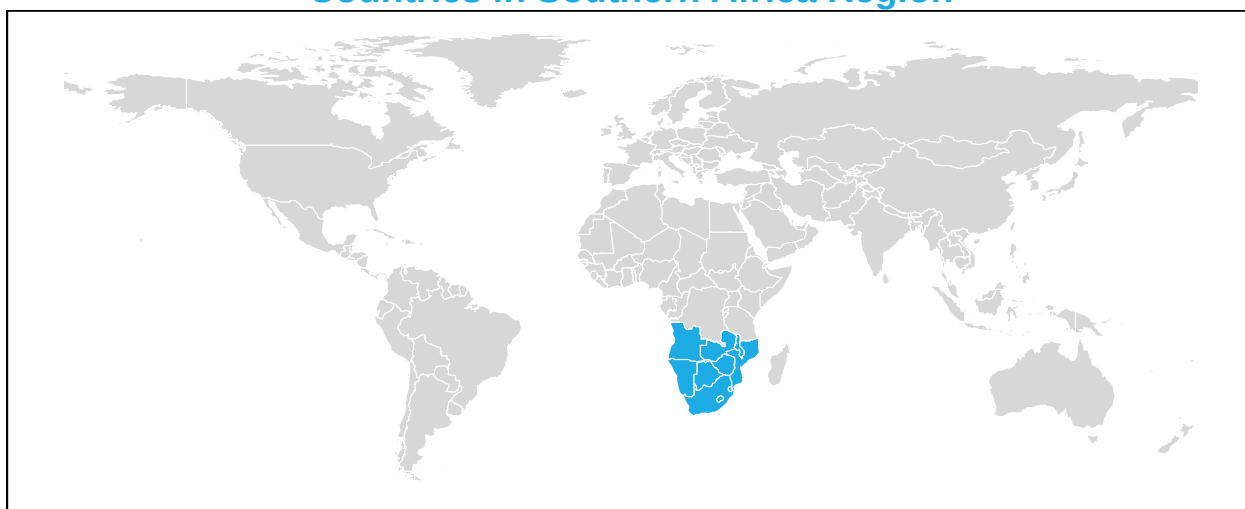
WUENIC Talking Points: Southern Africa Region

Revision Year: 2025

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Countries in Southern Africa Region

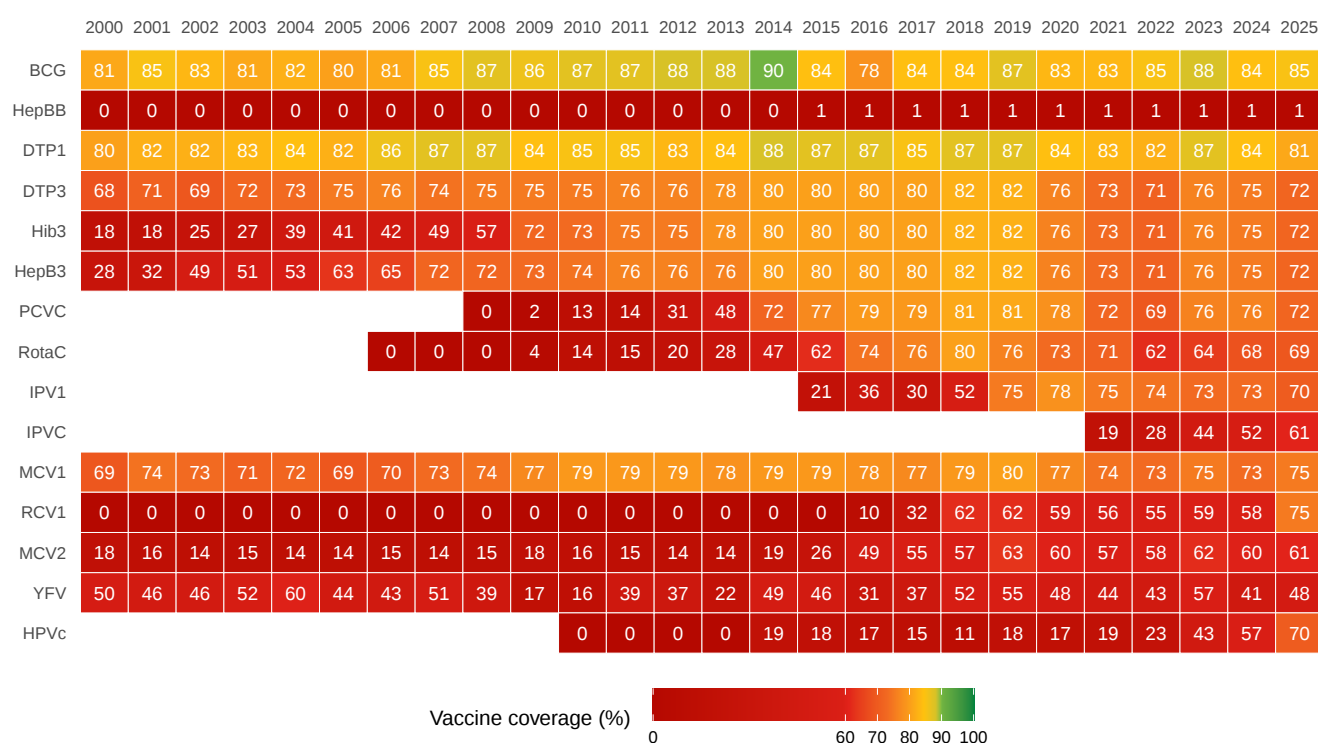


- The Southern Africa region includes the following 10 countries: Angola, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Overview

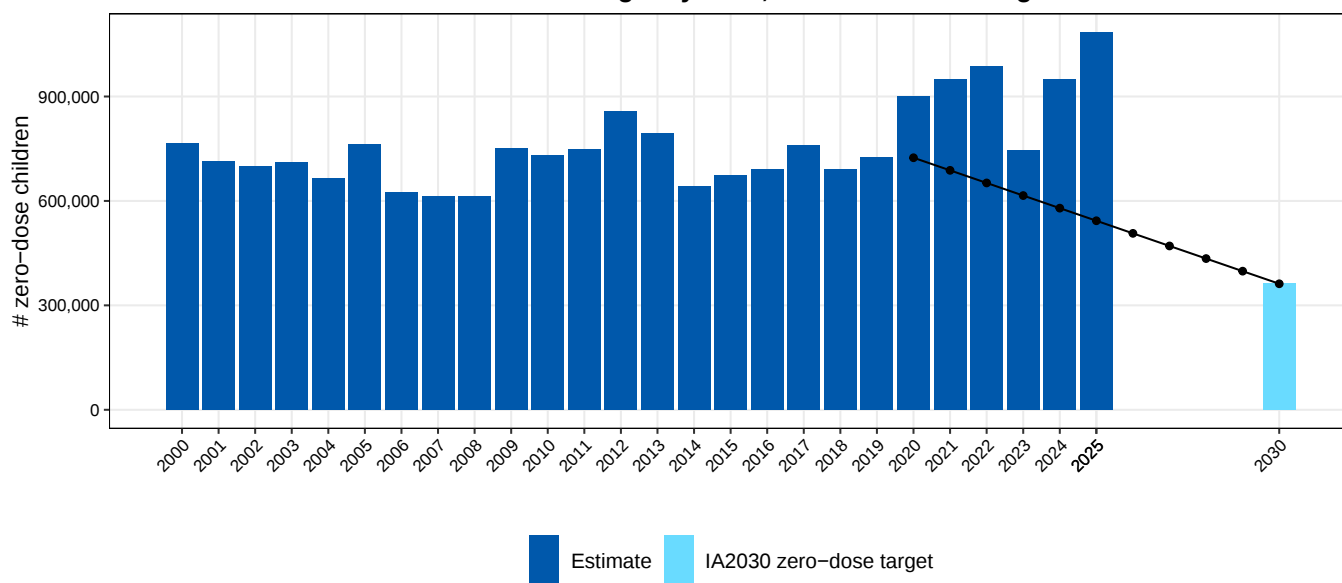
- While noting variations across countries and vaccines, none of the 14 childhood vaccines achieved an average coverage of 90% or higher within the Southern Africa region in 2025.
- Coverage of the first dose of diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis-containing vaccine (DTP1) declined from 84% in 2024 to 81% in 2025, and coverage of the third dose of DTP-containing vaccine (DTP3) declined from 75% in 2024 to 72% in 2025. Coverage of the first dose of the measles-containing vaccine (MCV1) increased from 73% in 2024 to 75% in 2025.
- A total of 7 out of 10 countries reached target coverage (90%) for all 14 antigens, representing 70% of the region.
- There were 3 countries that did not meet the target coverage across all antigens: Angola, Lesotho, and South Africa.
- In 2025, the number of zero-dose children (1.1 million) was approximately 100% higher than the annual number proposed to achieve the Immunization Agenda 2030 target of reducing the number of zero-dose children by half by 2030 in Southern Africa region (543,000), based on a linear trajectory of decline.

Vaccine coverage (%), Southern Africa Region, 2000–2025



Source: WHO/UNICEF estimates of national immunization coverage, 2025 revision.

Estimated number of zero-dose children, 2000–2025 and target by 2030, Southern Africa Region



Source: WHO/UNICEF estimates of national immunization coverage, 2025 revision.
 Note: The Immunization Agenda 2030 (IA2030) calls on all countries to reduce the number of zero-dose children in 2019 in half by 2030. Dark blue bars are the estimated number of zero-dose children in 2000–2025, light blue bar is the target number of zero-dose children by 2030. The line and points show the yearly progress and trajectory to meet the target by 2030, based on a linear decline.

DTP1: Reaching zero-dose children

- The number of children vaccinated with DTP1 increased 1.8% from 4.7 million in 2019 to 4.8 million in 2025.
- DTP1 coverage in 2025 was 81%, lower than in both 2019 (87%) and 2024 (84%).
- In 2025, the number of zero-dose children (1.1 million) was approximately 100% higher than the annual number proposed to achieve the Immunization Agenda 2030 target in Southern Africa region (543,000), based on a linear trajectory of decline.
- In 2025, Angola and South Africa represented approximately 42% and 35% of all zero-dose children in Southern Africa (n = 1.1 million), respectively. Angola had the highest number of zero-dose children at 454,000, and South Africa had the second highest at 380,000.
- In 2025, the lowest DTP1 coverage was observed in Angola and South Africa at 67%, followed by Eswatini at 84%.
- There were 5 (50%) out of 10 countries in the region that achieved DTP1 coverage of 90% or higher in 2025 - Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Zambia, and Botswana.

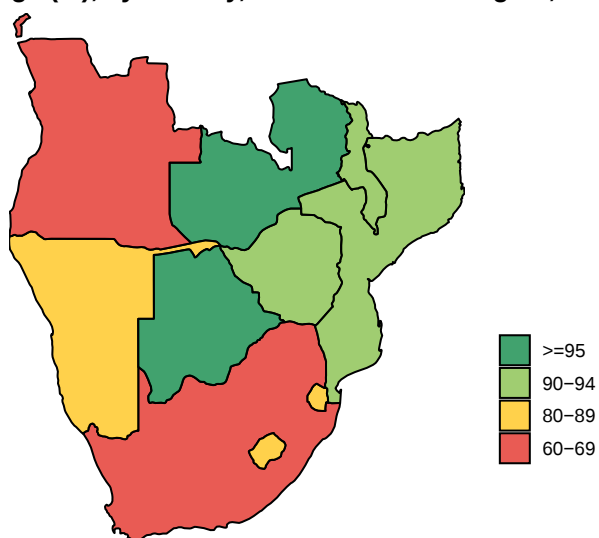
**DTP1 coverage (%), by country,
Southern Africa Region, 2000–2025**

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Botswana	98	98	98	98	98	98	98	98	98	98	98	98	98	98	98	98	98	98	98	98	98	98	98	98	98	98
Zambia	94	94	94	93	93	92	92	93	95	96	92	87	86	86	96	97	96	95	94	94	88	94	98	94	94	96
Malawi	98	99	94	99	99	99	99	96	97	97	97	98	99	96	97	93	89	93	96	97	95	95	89	95	94	94
Zimbabwe	84	83	81	79	77	80	83	86	89	87	95	99	99	98	98	94	94	94	94	94	93	93	93	93	93	93
Mozambique	84	86	88	89	88	87	86	85	87	89	91	91	91	90	90	90	90	90	90	90	83	76	81	90	90	90
Lesotho	87	83	89	95	95	95	96	96	96	96	97	97	98	98	94	89	92	93	93	92	93	95	94	90	86	88
Namibia	90	88	86	87	88	93	91	88	88	87	87	88	89	94	92	98	90	94	94	92	93	94	90	88	79	86
Eswatini	94	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	96	95	95	98	97	99	99	96	96	96	96	96	87	86	99	89	91	84
Southern Africa	80	82	82	83	84	82	86	87	87	84	85	85	83	84	88	87	87	85	87	87	84	83	82	87	84	81
Angola	44	56	64	66	73	59	63	66	66	66	67	67	67	67	69	67	72	68	75	70	67	65	63	79	70	67
South Africa	85	82	80	77	80	83	94	95	93	81	80	80	72	81	88	91	88	85	84	87	88	91	87	81	76	67



Source: WHO/UNICEF estimates of national immunization coverage, 2025 revision.
Note: Countries ordered based on descending DTP1 coverage in 2025.

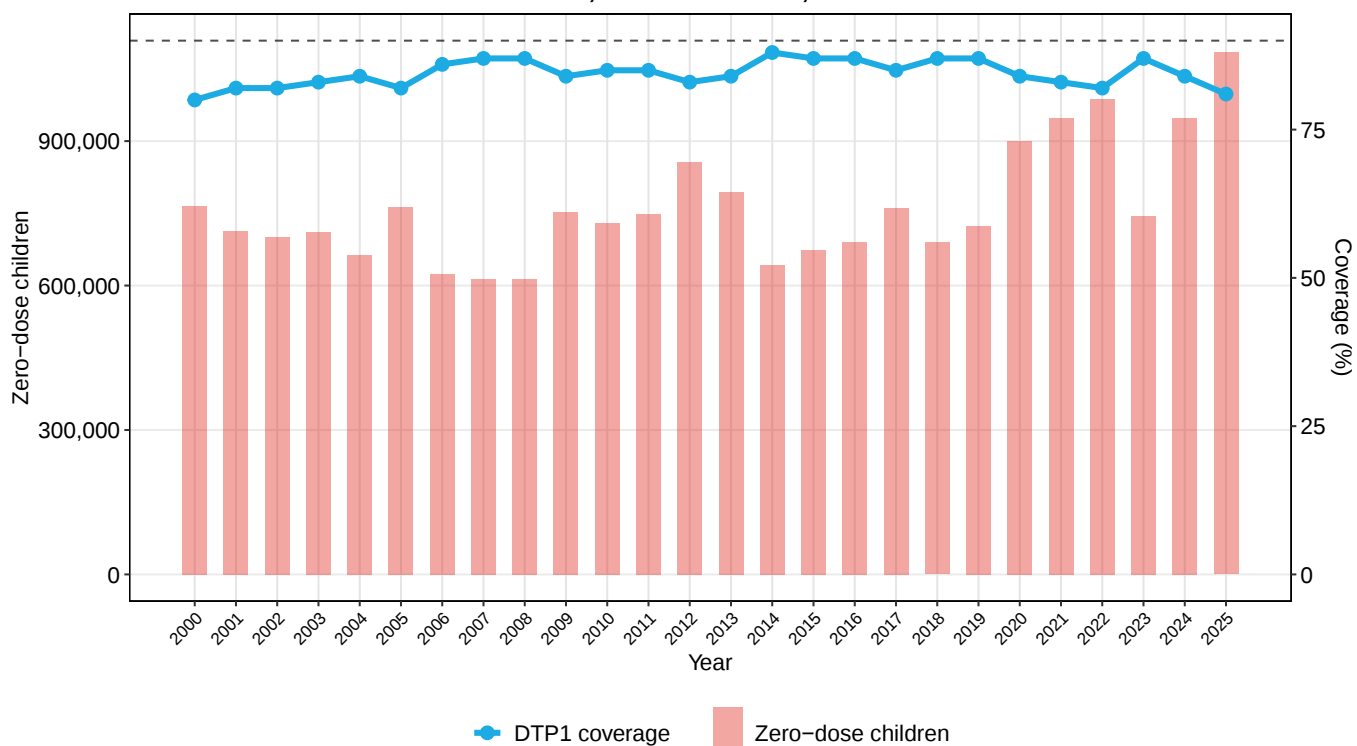
DTP1 coverage (%), by country, Southern Africa Region, 2025



Source: WHO/UNICEF estimates of national immunization coverage, 2025 revision.

Note: This map is stylized and based on an approximate scale.
This map does not reflect a position by UNICEF or WHO on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers.

DTP1 coverage and zero-dose children over time, Southern Africa, 2000-2025



Dotted line shows the IA2030 target of 90% coverage
Source: WHO/UNICEF estimates of national immunization coverage, 2025 revision.

DTP3: A marker of routine immunization service delivery to children

- The number of children vaccinated with DTP3 decreased 4.7% from 4.4 million in 2019 to 4.2 million in 2025. Due to population growth of approximately 8% between 2019 and 2025, DTP3 coverage in 2025 (72%) was lower than in 2019 (82%).
- DTP3 coverage in 2025 was 72%, lower than in both 2019 (82%) and 2024 (75%).
- In 2025, 12% of children who received DTP1 did not receive DTP3, which was 6 percentage points higher than in 2019 (6%); high dropout rates imply poor ability to provide a complete series of vaccines early in life.
- In 2025, DTP3 coverage ranged from 52% in Angola to 95% in Botswana.
- In 2025, Angola had DTP3 coverage of 52% and the highest absolute number of un- and undervaccinated children in the region (660,000), followed by South Africa with 65% coverage and 403,000 un- and undervaccinated children.

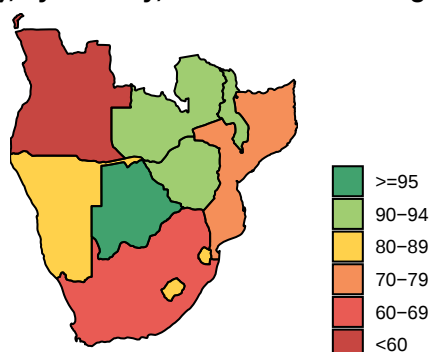
**DTP3 coverage (%), by country,
Southern Africa Region, 2000–2025**

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Botswana	97	97	97	96	96	96	96	96	96	96	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	95	86	95	95	95
Zambia	85	85	84	83	83	82	81	80	87	94	83	81	78	79	86	90	95	94	90	88	84	91	88	86	87	91
Zimbabwe	78	75	71	68	65	68	70	73	75	73	89	93	95	95	91	87	90	89	89	90	86	88	90	90	91	91
Malawi	75	90	64	84	89	93	99	87	91	93	93	97	96	89	91	88	84	88	92	95	94	93	86	91	91	90
Lesotho	84	79	85	90	90	89	89	88	88	91	93	96	95	93	88	83	87	89	90	92	93	95	92	90	86	88
Eswatini	84	84	85	85	86	86	87	87	88	88	89	91	95	98	98	90	90	90	90	90	83	77	97	85	84	84
Namibia	79	78	77	79	81	86	86	86	83	83	83	82	84	89	88	92	85	88	89	87	93	94	84	83	74	82
Southern Africa	68	71	69	72	73	75	76	74	75	75	75	76	76	78	80	80	80	80	82	82	76	73	71	76	75	72
Mozambique	70	73	76	85	83	80	78	75	75	74	74	77	80	82	85	85	85	85	85	85	71	56	55	70	70	70
South Africa	73	71	70	69	74	81	84	85	82	81	77	75	71	81	85	85	85	84	82	85	84	86	85	79	74	65
Angola	31	42	47	46	47	47	44	43	45	47	49	50	52	54	55	56	57	55	64	61	55	50	48	60	58	52



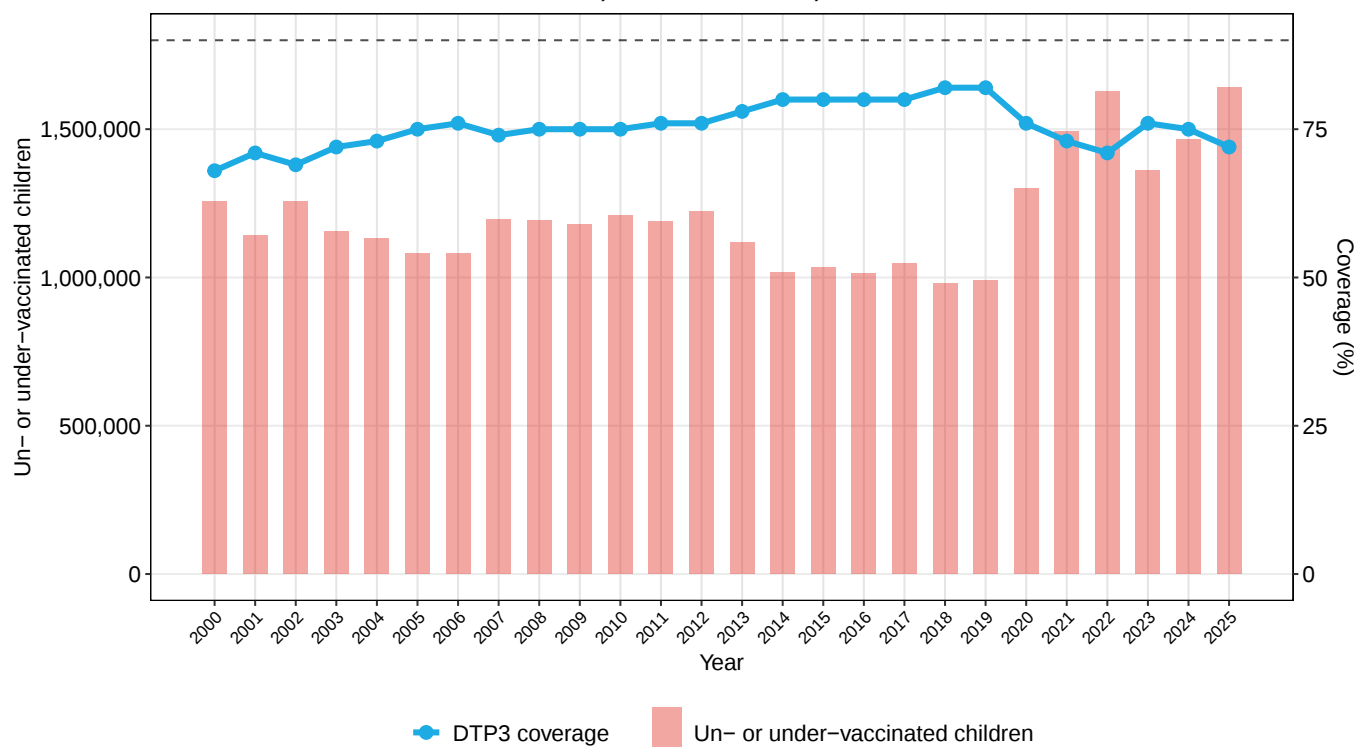
Source: WHO/UNICEF estimates of national immunization coverage, 2025 revision.
Note: Countries ordered based on descending DTP3 coverage in 2025.

DTP3 coverage (%), by country, Southern Africa Region, 2025



Source: WHO/UNICEF estimates of national immunization coverage, 2025 revision.
Note: This map is stylized and based on an approximate scale.
This map does not reflect a position by UNICEF or WHO on the legal status of any country or territory or the delimitation of any frontiers.

**DTP3 coverage and un- or under-vaccinated children
over time, Southern Africa, 2000–2025**



Dotted line shows the IA2030 target of 90% coverage
Source: WHO/UNICEF estimates of national immunization coverage, 2025 revision.

MCV: Canary in the coal mine

- MCV1 coverage in 2025 was 75%, lower than in 2019 (80%) but higher than in 2024 (73%).
- Coverage of the second dose of the measles-containing vaccine (MCV2) in 2025 was 61%, lower than in 2019 (63%) but higher than in 2024 (60%). This leaves 1.4 million children without any protection and another 738,000 with only partial protection against the measles virus.
- In 2025, 8% of children who received DTP1 did not receive MCV1. This 8% dropout rate was the same as in 2019 but lower than the 2024 dropout rate (13%).
- Medium DTP-MCV dropout rates imply moderate retention in immunization programmes.
- 2 countries (Angola and Mozambique) had MCV1 coverage below 80% for all of the last 3 years.
- In 2025, Mozambique had the highest number of children who did not receive the measles vaccine (439,000), representing approximately 30% of all children unprotected against measles in Southern Africa (1.4 million).

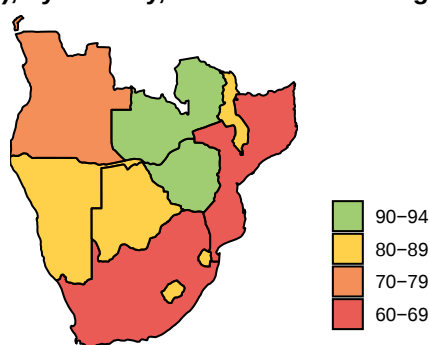
MCV1 coverage (%), by country,
Southern Africa Region, 2000–2025

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Zambia	85	84	84	84	85	85	85	93	87	90	96	83	82	80	85	90	97	96	94	93	96	90	88	86	91	92
Zimbabwe	75	73	70	68	66	67	68	69	70	76	90	92	97	93	92	86	95	90	88	85	85	88	90	90	90	90
Eswatini	92	93	93	93	93	93	93	94	94	94	94	87	88	97	97	89	89	89	85	81	76	80	83	85	85	88
Malawi	73	81	69	77	80	82	85	83	88	92	93	96	90	88	85	87	81	83	87	92	90	90	82	87	89	88
Namibia	69	58	68	70	70	73	63	69	73	76	75	74	76	82	83	85	75	80	82	80	90	91	89	86	79	84
Botswana	91	91	92	92	93	93	94	95	95	96	96	97	97	97	97	97	97	97	97	97	87	97	90	97	97	83
Lesotho	74	70	78	85	84	83	82	81	80	84	88	92	91	90	92	93	90	89	89	90	90	90	84	76	90	80
Southern Africa	69	74	73	71	72	69	70	73	74	77	79	79	79	78	79	79	78	77	79	80	77	74	73	75	73	75
Angola	41	72	74	62	64	45	48	58	58	58	59	59	59	59	56	52	49	47	56	59	54	48	50	63	53	71
South Africa	72	69	65	62	63	64	69	68	73	77	72	77	79	78	84	86	84	81	81	83	84	87	86	80	76	66
Mozambique	71	74	77	80	79	78	76	75	77	80	82	82	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	83	73	62	63	65	65	65



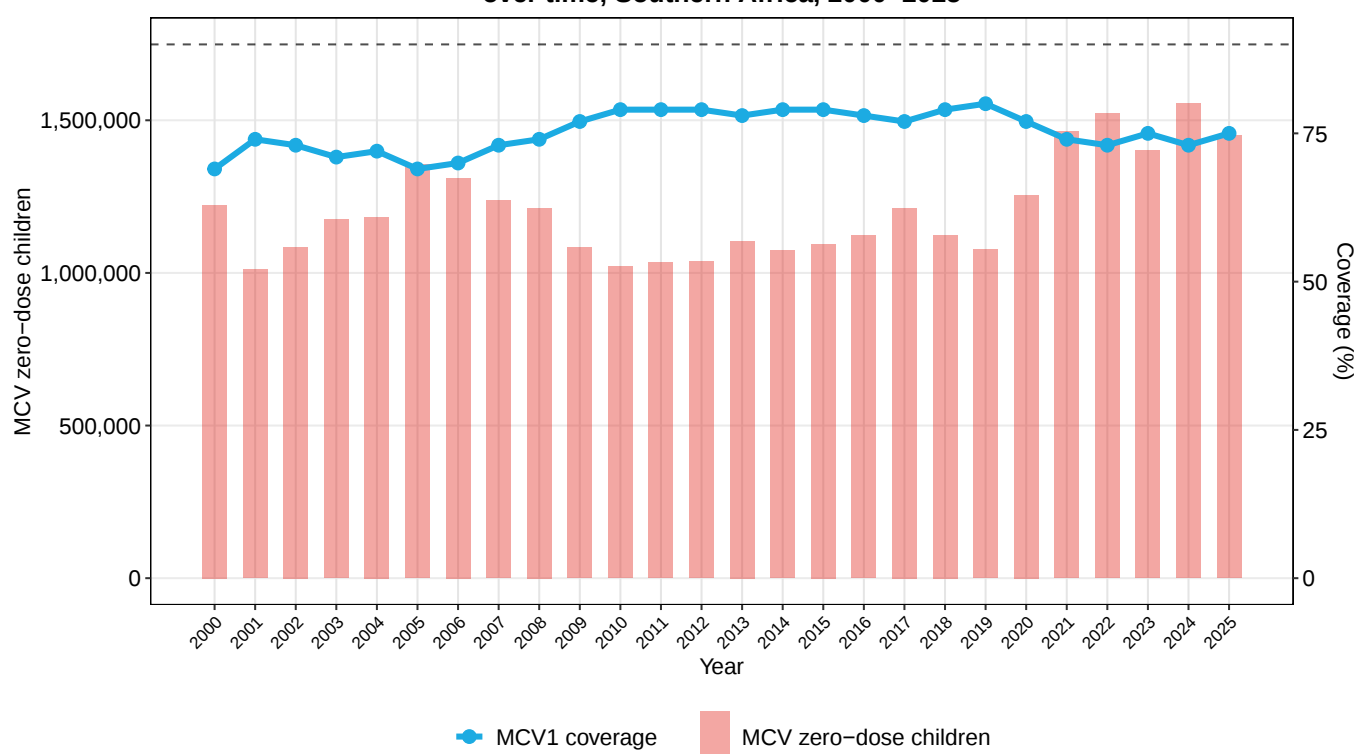
Source: WHO/UNICEF estimates of national immunization coverage, 2025 revision.
Note: Countries ordered based on descending MCV1 coverage in 2025.

MCV1 coverage (%), by country, Southern Africa Region, 2025



Source: WHO/UNICEF estimates of national immunization coverage, 2025 revision.
 Note: This map is stylized and based on an approximate scale.
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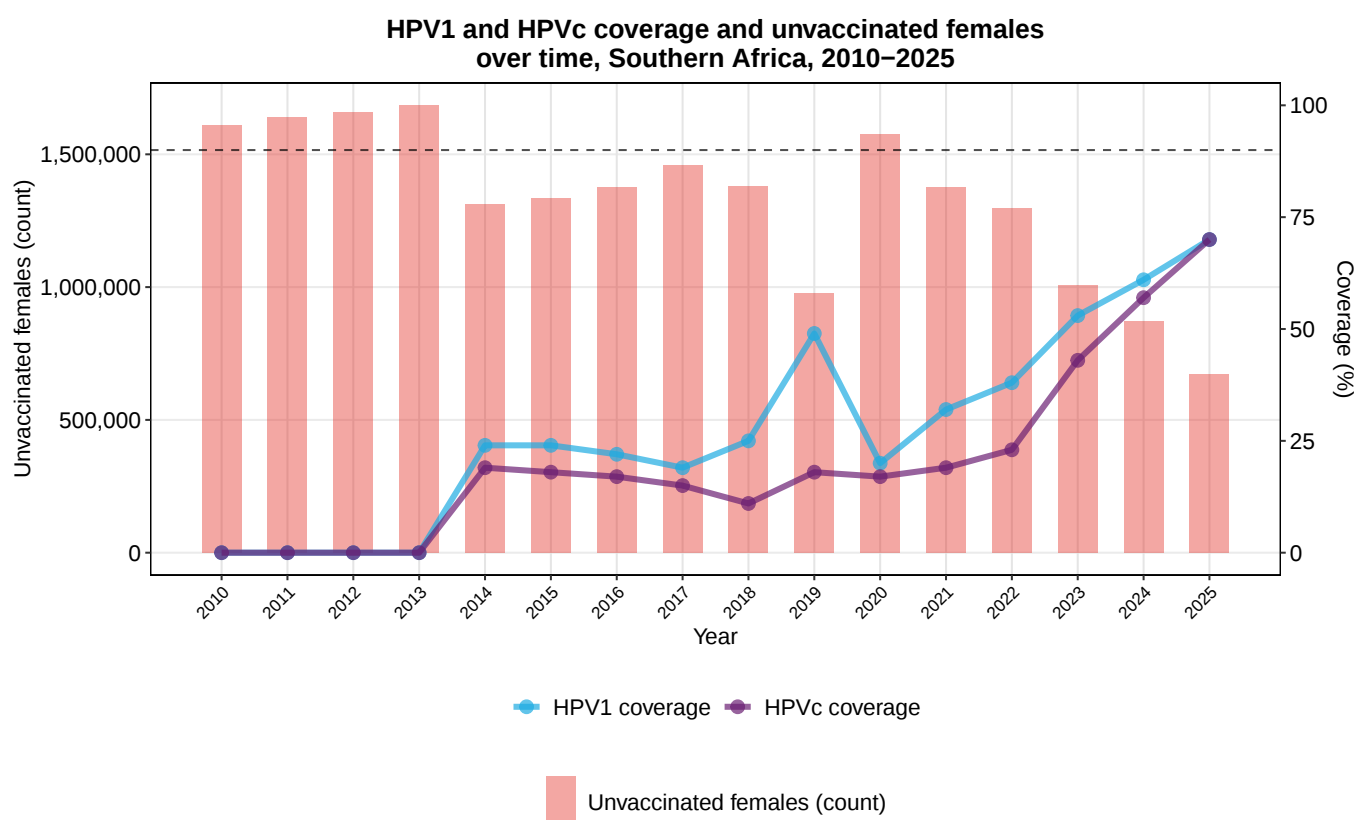
MCV coverage and MCV zero-dose children over time, Southern Africa, 2000-2025



Dotted line shows the IA2030 target of 90% coverage
 Source: WHO/UNICEF estimates of national immunization coverage, 2025 revision.

HPV

- Programme coverage of the first dose of HPV vaccine (HPV1) among girls stood at 70% in 2025, which was higher than the coverage of 61% in 2024.
- Coverage of the last dose (HPVc) stood at 70% in 2025, which was higher than the coverage of 57% in 2024.
- HPVc coverage remains well below the IA2030 target of 90%, though it is trending upward.
- In 2025, there were 672,000 girls who did not receive any HPV vaccination.
- All 10 countries in Southern Africa had introduced HPV vaccination by 2025.
 - WUENIC HPV coverage estimates are available for 9 (90%) of these countries in 2025.
 - The country that has introduced HPV vaccination but does not yet have WUENIC coverage data available for 2025 is Botswana.



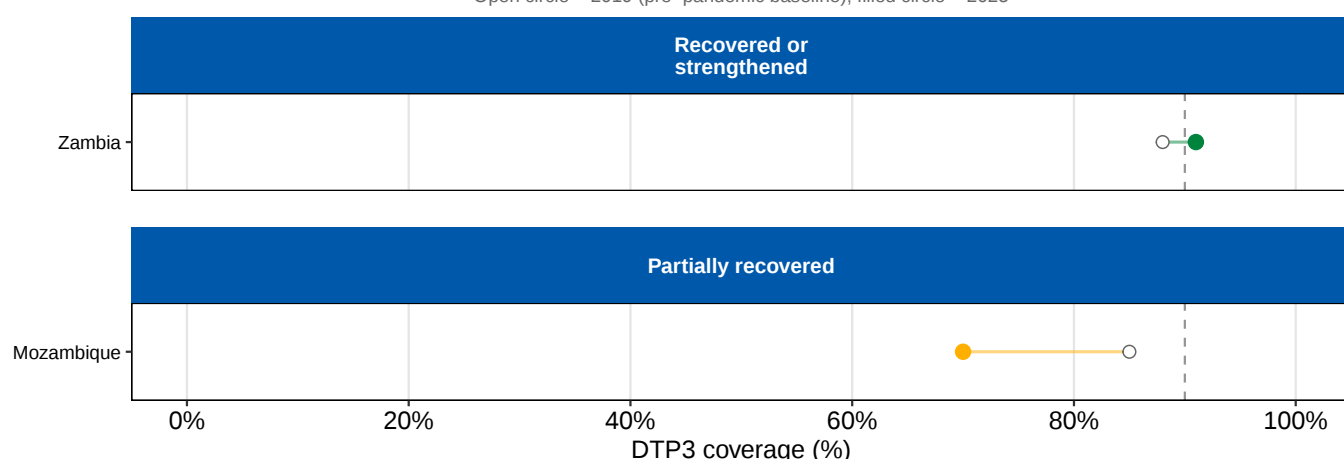
Dotted line shows the IA2030 target of 90% coverage
 Source: WHO/UNICEF estimates of national immunization coverage, 2025 revision.

Priority countries supported to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic

- Of the 35 countries that were globally supported for the Big Catch-up, 2 are in Southern Africa.
 - Zambia fully recovered to or exceeded its 2019 DTP3 levels.
 - Mozambique is on the path to recovery to 2019 DTP3 levels.

DTP3 coverage recovery from COVID-19 pandemic, Southern Africa

Open circle = 2019 (pre-pandemic baseline); filled circle = 2025



Dotted line shows the IA2030 target of 90% coverage.

Countries shown are Big Catch-Up priority countries in Southern Africa.

Source: WHO/UNICEF estimates of national immunization coverage, 2025 revision.

Recovery Methodology

This analysis tracks DTP3 coverage trends from 2019 to 2025 to assess post-pandemic recovery. Countries are categorized based on their progress toward 2019 baseline levels:

- **Recovered or strengthened:** 2025 coverage is equal to or higher than 2019 levels.
- **Partially recovered:** Coverage in 2025 is still below 2019 levels but has improved by at least 3 percentage points from its lowest point in 2020 or 2021.
- **Lower than 2019 levels:** Coverage in 2025 remains below 2019 levels and has shown less than 3 percentage points of improvement from its lowest point in 2020 or 2021.

Appendix

WHO/UNICEF Estimates of National Immunization Coverage (WUENIC)

Each year, WHO and UNICEF review national immunization data from Member States, including administrative and official coverage, survey estimates and contextual information, and use rules-based data triangulation approach to assess coverage. Estimates are produced independently, without borrowing data from other countries, and are not based on ad hoc adjustments. In some cases, they rely on a single source, typically nationally reported coverage. When data for a specific country-vaccine-year are unavailable, values from adjacent years are interpolated or extrapolated, and conflicting sources are assessed to determine the most reliable estimate, considering potential biases and expert opinion.

Methods:

- [Burton et al. 2009. WHO and UNICEF estimates of national infant immunization coverage: methods and processes](#)
- [Burton et al. 2012. A formal representation of the WHO and UNICEF estimates of national immunization coverage: a computational logic approach](#)
- [Brown et al. 2013. An introduction to the grade of confidence used to characterize uncertainty around the WHO and UNICEF estimates of national immunization coverage](#)

These talking points present the latest WUENIC estimates (published 15 July 2026).

Definitions of immunization terms:

- Bacillus Calmette-Guerin (BCG): vaccine against tuberculosis
- Hepatitis B birth dose, given within 24 hours after birth (HepBB)
- Diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis vaccine, first dose (DTP1) and third dose (DTP3)
- Hepatitis B vaccine, third dose (HepB3)
- Haemophilus influenzae type B vaccine, third dose (Hib3)
- Inactivated polio vaccine, first dose (IPV1) and last dose (IPVC)
- Measles containing vaccine, first dose (MCV1) and second dose (MCV2)
- Rotavirus vaccine, last dose (RotaC)
- Pneumococcal vaccine, last dose (PCV)
- Yellow Fever vaccine (YFV)
- Meningococcal A vaccine (MengA)
- Human Papillomavirus vaccine, first dose (HPV1) and last dose (HPVc)

Additional resources: <https://data.unicef.org/resources/immunization/>