

LNCT 2019 Network-wide Meeting Practitioner Perspectives Interviews: Côte d'Ivoire

Mamadou Samba:

I am Professor Mamadou Samba, Director General of Health of the Ministry of Health and Public Hygiene for Côte d'Ivoire.

Kouadio Daniel Ekra:

I am Professor Kouadio Daniel Ekra, Coordinating Director of the Expanded Program of Immunization for Côte d'Ivoire.

Mamadou:

Thanks, Alexis, but first of all I would like to thank Gavi first for this opportunity. We are the last ones registered at the platform level, we participated actively in its work and we learned a lot. We came here with an open mind to understand what other countries had done and how we are going, we in turn, are mobilizing ourselves in order to make a successful transition. We had very fruitful exchanges on the basis of very technical and very dense rotations. We learned a lot from our different countries that participated in this activity, in particular, I would like to mention Georgia which is a country that has made a successful transition and we, Côte d'Ivoire, hope, with a lot of work, to also succeed in our transition so that on Gavi's exit, the shock is best amortized for the country.

Alexis Mourou Moyoka:

Côte d'Ivoire is entering the accelerated phase of its transition and is in the process of developing the document, that is to say, the transition plan that will enable the country to move towards a successful exit from eligibility for Gavi support. So, from these exchanges, have you learned any useful lessons in the development of this strategic document, the transition plan?

Mamadou:

From these exchanges we have retained several elements: that there must be first of all a strong implication at the country level, an important political desire and also the accompaniment of the various technical departments, in particular the Ministry of Finance, and with us in Côte d'Ivoire, the National Health Insurance Fund which will very soon be the financier of our care in Côte d'Ivoire. With regard to the technical part of the development, I will give the floor to Professor Ekra, who is the Director of the EPI, who will develop all the activities we have undertaken to reach this stage.

Kouadio:

Thank you, Mr. Director General. Côte d'Ivoire has been committed to the transition process since 2016. We are in the preparatory transition phase and in 2020, Côte d'Ivoire should begin the accelerated transition, which should end in 2025 with the exit of Gavi eligibility. In the transition process, of the preparation for the transition. We already had a job with Gavi's support in March 2019, which brought together all the health partners. The Director General quoted the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the Ministry of the Budget and local bilateral and multilateral partners who all participated in this activity.

The next step is to make it possible to define the costs at the EPI level because one thing is to go to the transition, but another is also to know the EPI costs so that the country can know what they are doing in the accelerated transition phase. And so we are at this stage. We have asked our partners to help us with cost estimates, and this will be done in the coming months. And advocating with these costs, advocacy will be made to the government for long-term commitments.

I would like to point out that Côte d'Ivoire has already made efforts in the preparatory transition phase where Côte d'Ivoire has undertaken to pay for vaccines in advance. And so the budgets are known in advance with estimates that were made in 2016 to the point where, at the budget conference, all that is needed is for the [unintelligible] ministry ... to take out the commitment document from the Côte d'Ivoire state so that budget levels are included in the EPI budget. So it's already acquired. The country, the government is sufficiently sensitized to the exit of the transition, so we are waiting for this crucial step where we must be able to make the costs, estimate the costs and advocate to the government so that the commitments are made for 2021 until 2025. Here is what will happen technically and practically for the transition phase.

Alexis:

So, as you can see, you have identified the different areas of intervention on which the transition plan should focus. And just as part of the platform, you know that you have an idea now of the contributions of this platform, but also, beyond the session, the way in which to continue using this platform. Maybe you have ideas about what could be improved at the platform level to better support you not only in the development of this document, the transition plan, but also in its implementation.

Kouadio:

As for the exchanges on the platform, in fact it is the regularity of the exchanges. We have just arrived and we find, according to what has been said, that the meetings are not regular enough. Countries need to discuss specific themes and therefore we want meetings between different countries, for example those who are in the transition phase and those who have already left and who have concerns, that these exchanges are regular in order to allow newcomers to learn from the experience of others. I think there is a particular problem that each country is going to face. It's mostly the costs of the vaccines. Until now there is the guarantee that some manufacturers could support the countries that are in transition for at least ten years and we hope that this support is effective. So it is also necessary that all of these countries that come out of the Gavi initiative can join together to bring their difficulties to the partners and our leaders so that the problem can be solved in a collegiate way, especially the problem of vaccine accessibility.

Alexis:

You have seen that this platform gives the opportunity to countries that share the same concerns to sometimes have meetings. Have you been able to identify, in the different experiences that have been presented to you, a country that you are particularly interested in and whose experience could be of particular use to Côte d'Ivoire in this preparation phase for the exit of the eligibility?

Mamadou:

Thanks Alexis. Actually we have had 17 countries. We have seen the [unintelligible] of these countries. The country we want to resemble is Georgia with macroeconomic indicators that look a bit like ours. And we believe that if we build on the example of Georgia, we can also make a successful transition. However, Georgia is far from Côte d'Ivoire. We also have regional problems, so we could also think that we can meet regionally to see what problems we have at regional level and to see how far we and others have managed to raise these obstacles. Otherwise, the country that has impressed us the most in this session, in this work, is Georgia, and we really hope to be a model for African countries just as Georgia is for us today.