

Mission 2027: Rwanda's Bold Strategy to Eliminate Cervical Cancer – A Real-Life Mission Possible



Stockholm, November 17, 2024 — Today, on Global Cervical Cancer Elimination Day of Action, the Minister of Health in Rwanda and the Elekta Foundation officially announced their endorsement of the Mission 2027 campaign. This ambitious initiative aims to make Rwanda the first country in Africa to eliminate cervical cancer.

Every two minutes, a woman loses her life to cervical cancer. Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest regional incidence and mortality rates, making cervical cancer a leading cause of cancer-related death. In Rwanda, cervical cancer is also a major public health problem, significantly affecting women's health. Caused by the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) in most cases, cervical cancer is highly preventable and treatable, underscoring the urgent need for effective vaccination, screening, and treatment strategies to reduce its devastating impact.

To eliminate cervical cancer globally, the World Health Organization (WHO) has outlined key targets in its Global Strategy to Accelerate the Elimination of Cervical Cancer as a Public Health Problem: by 2030, 90% of girls should be vaccinated against HPV by the age of 15, 70% of women should be screened for HPV between the ages of 35 and 45, and 90% of women with cervical pre-cancer or cancer should receive appropriate treatment. These targets aim to reduce the global burden of cervical cancer and save countless lives.

Since 2011, Rwanda has implemented a national HPV vaccination program, achieving a 90% vaccination rate. To accelerate progress in eliminating cervical cancer, the Ministry of Health in Rwanda is launching **Mission 2027**—a national mass screening campaign aimed at reaching 70% screening coverage by 2027. To date, 28% of eligible women have been screened, with an additional 900,000 women awaiting screening to help achieve this critical target.

“At the Elekta Foundation, we are enormously thankful for the collaboration with the Rwanda Ministry of Health and its unwavering commitment to this cause. Now we are looking forward to having a dialogue with international development agencies, the private sector, and civil society to support us in reaching Mission 2027. With the financial support of these partners, we can eliminate cervical cancer and ensure a healthier future for all women in Rwanda through Mission 2027,” says Cecilia Wikström, Chair of the Elekta Foundation.

The comprehensive plan for **Mission 2027**, developed by the Ministry of Health in collaboration with the Elekta Foundation and other local and international partners, focuses on screening, early detection, and ensuring timely treatment for cervical cancer.

“I'm proud of my country Rwanda for its tireless efforts to eliminate cervical cancer, as well as of my second home, Sweden, for the remarkable support provided by the Swedish Elekta Foundation. The contributions have complemented the steadfast ambitions of Rwanda's Ministry of Health and numerous valuable partners, stemming from continuous campaigns initiated by Her Excellency, First Lady Mrs. Jeannette Kagame, since 2011. Thanks to these initiatives, Rwanda achieved a cervical cancer vaccination rate of 93%, the highest globally. I have no doubt that Rwanda, together with its partners, will soon achieve the global goal set by the WHO.”, says Dr Diane Gashumba, Ambassador of Rwanda to the Nordics with residency in Sweden.

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Elekta Foundation is a non-profit organization with the mission to improve cancer care access in underserved countries. The work is focusing on two areas: Expand Training & Education and Increase Awareness & Prevention. Since inception in 2022 comprehensive work has been initiated in Rwanda with the goal to eliminate cervical cancer and this by collaborating with government, international and local NGOs, healthcare providers and the private sector.

More information on cervical cancer:

-Cervical Cancer Elimination Day of Action, [Cervical Cancer Elimination Day of Action 2024](#)

-About Cervical Cancer, [Cervical cancer \(who.int\)](#)

-About Cervical Cancer Elimination Initiative, [Cervical Cancer Elimination Initiative](#)

-[Global cancer burden growing, amidst mounting need for services \(who.int\)](#)

-WHO Global Strategy to accelerate the elimination of cervical cancer as a public health problem, [Global strategy to accelerate the elimination of cervical cancer as a public health problem](#)