BANISHED from Bhutan
This is the story of how the Kingdom of Bhutan led the way in eliminating measles.
During the 1970s, measles afflicted most children in Bhutan.
In 2000, WHO estimated that measles accounted for 5% of under-five deaths globally.
Reducing this number was closely linked to the Millennium Development Goal 4

Bhutan set out to reduce under-five mortality by two thirds by 2015
And it achieved this goal...
Then in 2013, the Regional Committee for WHO South-East Asia Region set the target of eliminating measles from the region by 2020.
BHUTAN NOT ONLY ELIMINATED MEASLES, BUT LED THE WAY IN DOING SO…
How did Bhutan do this?

A small country, leading the way?

How did Bhutan do this?
There were many factors that contributed to Bhutan’s success…
Strong leadership
Constitutional guarantees with well backed National Immunisation Policy

“The State shall provide free access to basic health services in both modern and traditional medicine”
- Article 9, Constitution of Bhutan, Year 2008
Visionary Policy and Planning - at all levels
Key plans include:

Comprehensive Multi-Year Plan (cMYP) 2014 – 2018

Immunization Micro plans at all levels of health services
Financial Commitment

Close to 88% of health financing by the government
Effective Partnerships
The Bhutan Health Fund was established in collaboration with WHO in 1998
Significant contributions from UNICEF, World Bank Japan Aid and other agencies
Adequate and quality infrastructure
National and regional referral hospitals
National Measles Rubella Laboratory at Royal Centre for Disease Control

WHO accredited in 2006 | Virology & serology testing
30 hospitals across the country
210 basic health units
49 health sub posts
Passionate & committed health staff
Effective management
All ensuring Immunization services are available at all health facilities.
Close to 96% immunization coverage
Provision of safe immunization to all -including those living in remote areas
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Cold chain, logistics, safety and waste management
Strong Surveillance
Timely and accurate laboratory testing
Careful documentation & case reporting
Strong Monitoring team
Monitoring followed by timely action
Significant Events
1979
Introduction of EPI and MCV 1
2006

MCV 2 and MR introduced in RI
2007
Case based measles, rubella surveillance introduced
2010
3 Outbreaks
2012
Last endemic measles case
2015
Strengthened surveillance with reporting to SEARO/WHO
2013 & 2014
Zero cases for two years
2016
2 outbreaks and MMR introduced into RI
On 20 April 2017, the WHO South-East Asia Verification Committee certified that, based on the evidence submitted...
Bhutan had eliminated endemic measles!