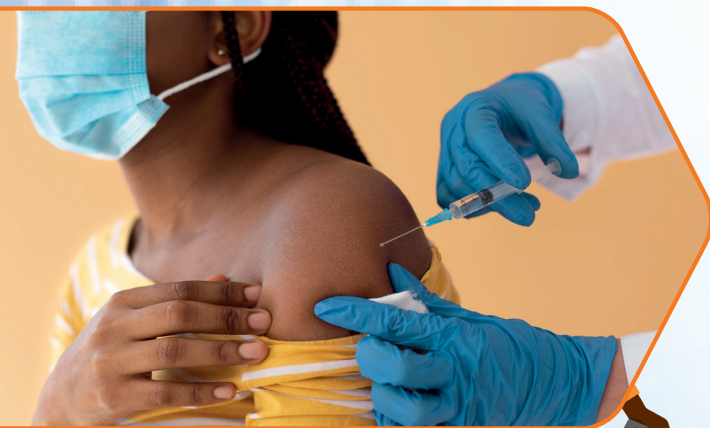




# **COUNTRY ADVOCACY BRIEF**



**Free our voices : Towards Accountable and Transparent  
COVID19 and Health Security Finances and Equitable  
Access to Vaccines in Senegal**

*This document has been produced with the financial  
assistance of the African Health Budget Network (AHBN)*

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## Project background

ARTICLE 19 Senegal and West Africa entered in partnership with African Health Budget Net-work (AHBN) to develop a 18-months project “Towards Accountable and Transparent COVID19 and Health Security Finances and Equitable Access to Vaccines in Senegal” over the period of August 2023 to January 2025. Leveraging on the financial support of AHBN and project experiences in other African countries, ARTICLE 19 has been implementing the project to achieve the following objectives :

- Enhanced capacity of CSOs, advocates and media in Senegal to meaningfully engage, demand and improve health security accountability.
- Improved government domestic resource mobilization for Health Security and Local Vaccine Production.
- Increased media visibility of health security finances accountability via investigative journalism, increased number of published and aired stories August 2023 to January 2025

Engaging media and CSO, the project approach includes advocacy to foster accountability, transparency in the health security Finances and equity in the access to vaccines. This advocacy brief is produced to guide the action.

## Health security problems / Challenges

Since COVID-19, countries in West Africa including Senegal are increasingly becoming aware of the health challenges and response plans for epidemics. The health security challenges in Senegal at the moment include but not limited to :

- Underfinancing of the health sector
- National budget doesn't reflect clearly specific budget lines for health safety
- Lack of citizen involvement in healthcare governance
- Minimum weight of local authorities in healthcare budgets in Senegal
- Difficulties in accessing documentation and information in the health
- Accountability in the prevention of MPOX
- Health commission of the Parliament is not at all involved in health security high council either to follow, to contribute, allocate funds or control
- Resources funding annual plans of the High Council of Health Security "One Health" are mostly external
- 2019-2023 strategy on health security ended and the 2024-2025 strategy is not yet made public but design was announced
- No website for proactive disclosure of information on the National High Council on Health Security' activities
- Etc

## Efforts in addressing challenges

- Country has adopted a new decree for the National High Council of Global Health Security “ One health” -Haut Conseil National de la Sécurité Sanitaire Mondiale (HCSSM)
- Country undertakes external evaluation of International Health Regulations (IHR)<sup>1</sup>
- Country is pushing advocacy for local production of vaccines agenda
- Existence of different Labs projects led by the Institut Pasteur<sup>2</sup> for the Region
- Auditing health security finances management (case of COVID19 funds) and judicial investigation opened for the misuse of funds
- Country has a 10 years National Health and Social Development Plan, the Plan National de Développement Sanitaire et Social (National action plan of health and social development), known as PNDSS 2019-2028<sup>3</sup>, that is a strategic orientation document of health system.
- Country also has several operational health sectoral plans including :
  - ☐ National multisectoral action plan for monitoring and combating antimicrobial resistance<sup>4</sup>
  - ☐ National strategic plan to combat neglected tropical diseases 2022-2025<sup>5</sup>
  - ☐ National strategic plan to combat malaria in Senegal 2021-2025<sup>6</sup>
  - ☐ National strategic plan for an integrated multisectoral response to AIDS, tuberculosis, viral hepatitis and sexual transmissible infections 2023-2030<sup>7</sup>

1 <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241580496>

2 <https://institutpasteurdakar.sn/>

3 <https://sante.gouv.sn/sites/default/files/1%20MSAS%20PNDSS%202019%202028%20Version%20Finale.pdf>

4 [https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/antimicrobial-resistance/amr-spc-npm/nap-library/plan-d-action-ram\\_-se-ne-gal.pdf?sfvrsn=6947eae\\_3](https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/antimicrobial-resistance/amr-spc-npm/nap-library/plan-d-action-ram_-se-ne-gal.pdf?sfvrsn=6947eae_3)

5 <https://senegalpolitique.org/plan-strategique-national-de-lutte-contre-les-maladies-tropicales-negliees-20222025-senegal-ministere-de-la-sante-et-de-laction-sociale-2023/>

6 [https://senegal-cocreation.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/PSN\\_PNLP\\_Senegal\\_Version-finale\\_-Fevrier-2021.pdf](https://senegal-cocreation.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/PSN_PNLP_Senegal_Version-finale_-Fevrier-2021.pdf)

7 <https://cnls-senegal.org/2024/03/26/plan-strategie-national-pour-une-riposte-multisectorielle-integree-contre-le-sida-la-tuberculose-les-hepatites-virales-et-les-ist-2023-2030/>

- National strategic plan of the Health Emergency Operations Center “Centre des Opérations d’Urgence sanitaire -COUS”<sup>8</sup>
- Multi-sectoral contingency plan to combat COVID-19<sup>9</sup>
- The HCNSSM “One Health” is preparing to develop a new National Health Security Action Plan (PANSS) 2024-2028 after the implementation of the PANSS 2019-2023 according to the Minister Secretary General of the Government, quoted by the press<sup>10</sup>.

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8 <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/sen199946.pdf>

9 <https://www.exemplars.health/-/media/files/egh/resources/testing-and-surveillance-senegal/plan-de-contingence-covid-19-senegal-mars-2020.pdf>

10 <https://www.seneplus.com/sante/vers-lelaboration-dun-nouveau-plan-daction-national-pour-la>

## **The role of the CSO/AHBN grantees strategies to strengthen accountability**

- Development of complementary initiatives and coordination among CSOs
- Raising awareness among citizens about their contribution to the health budget
- Establishment of a CSO platform working on budget and public investments monitoring
- Partnership with media, journalists, bloggers was enlarged to the Association of Journalists in Health, Population and Development (AJSPD) and led to the publication of a dozen articles in the media and the adoption of priority themes for media investigative approaches in the field of health
- Partnership with health CSOs such as the Association Nationale de Lutte Contre le SIDA (ANCS)<sup>11</sup> and strengthening the engagement with the Réseau Citoyen pour la Transparence Budgétaire (RCTB)<sup>12</sup>
- Advocacy and assurance from the Minister of Justice for the start of legal proceedings following the Court of Auditors' report on the management of COVID-19
- Advocacy inside National Assembly / Health commission
- Plaidoyer au sein de l'Assemblée nationale/Commission de la santé

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<sup>11</sup> National Association for the Fight Against AIDS

<sup>12</sup> Citizen Network for Budget Transparency

## **Influences, changes and improvement to which CSOS / AHBN grantees have been contributing to**

- Demand for accountability for the management of health security resources, including the publication of the Court of Auditors' report.
- Strengthening of Epidemiological Surveillance Systems by improving disease surveillance through the use of advanced technologies and better data collection. Digital platforms have been strengthened to enable faster detection and more effective response to epidemics.
- Strengthening health infrastructure capacity through the construction and renovation of health center and hospital infrastructure, improving treatment capacity and the quality of care.
- Increased access to healthcare. Efforts have been made to increase access to healthcare, notably through the introduction of universal health coverage initiatives to reduce the cost of care.
- Improved Emergency Response : Preparedness exercises and updated plans have provided tools for a more rapid and effective response to health emergencies.
- Media reporting on health security in rise
- Decree establishing a high council on health security adopted making health security a matter of President's attention directly



## **CSO / AHBN grantees accomplishments so far**

- Trained 15 Journalists on investigative journalism in health budget reporting
- Capacity building and continuous engagement with 15 young people from community youth clubs established with the facilitation of ARTICLE 19 in the suburbs of Dakar to increase youth participation in public life
- Contacts and/or ongoing engagement with State institutions, including th Ministry of Health, CDC, Ministry of Justice, National Assembly
- A desk review conducted about transparency mechanisms in health security
- We have joined 2 platforms mainly: (i) The platform of CSOs working on the monitoring of public budget and investments, (ii) The group of human rights organizations working with health organizations for a better understanding and advocacy for the right to health as a fundamental right.
- Alignment of budget transparency in public service governing and disclosure of information among State national commitments in the for Open government Partnership National Action Plan.

## Recommendations

- Strengthen advocacy for the inclusion of a specific budget line for health security in the annual budget by the Finances department. Increase the health sector funding towards the regional threshold of 15% of the total State annual budget. Increase public involvement in healthcare governance through consultation and dialogue, including youth, women, people with disability and other discriminated groups.
- Increase the weight of local authorities in Senegal's healthcare budgets
- Improve access to information, data and documentation on health financing and policies.
- Improve media reporting, particularly media investigative stories on health security
- Strengthen financial transparency in the prevention of MPOX by the COUS of the health department
- Establish contact between the National Assembly's Health Committee and the High Council of Health Security to work on health security issues on an ongoing basis.
- Invest 5% of the total allocations of International partners funding Healthcare and Health Security to support monitoring initiatives aimed at improving accountability and transparency of finances in the sector.



## About African Health Budget Network

The Africa Health Budget Network (AHBN) is a nonprofit network of organizations and individuals created in 2013 to address the gap of low civil society participation in health budget advocacy in Africa. Driven by a vision for an African continent, where evidence including budget and finance information drive investment in health, AHBN mission is to foster transparent, accountable, sustainable, and innovative health financing for Africa by enabling African CSOs and Advocates to meaningfully influence investment that improves overall health and wellbeing. To achieve this mission, AHBN works to to advance and embed improvements in health budget allocation, spending, transparency, participation, and accountability to increase overall health and wellbeing.

### Contact

African Health Budget Network

N° 9 Berbera Street

Abuja, Federal Capital Territory

Nigeria

Phone : +234 806 258 6203

Email : [info@afrihbn.org](mailto:info@afrihbn.org)

Website : <https://afrihbn.info/>

## About ARTICLE 19 West Africa

ARTICLE 19 is an international think-do organisation that promotes freedom of expression and access to information for a world where all people can speak freely and actively participate in public life without fear of discrimination. We drive the movement for freedom of expression at both local and global levels so that all individuals can realize the power of their voices. Together with partners, ARTICLE 19 develops cutting-edge research, as well as legal and policy analyses, to foster institutional change. As a do-organisation, we take action, we drive change engaging with actors at the frontlines of expression, building their capacities, advocating and campaigning together across the region and globally and sparking innovation in the global movement for freedom of expression. ARTICLE 19 works on five key themes: promoting media independence, increasing access to information, protecting journalists, expanding civic space, and placing human rights at the core of digital space development. We believe that under the right to know, if citizens can proactively access information and data held by public and private sector, they can build their knowledge, make informed decisions, engage in public life and hold duties barriers accountable and transparent in the conduct of public mission.

### Contact

ARTICLE 19 West Africa

G60 Mamelles Aviations - Senegal

Tél : +221 33 869 03 22

Email : [senegal.westafrica@article19.org](mailto:senegal.westafrica@article19.org)

Website : [www.article19ao.org](http://www.article19ao.org)

Twitter : @article19org, @article19wafric

Facebook : [facebook.com/article19org](https://facebook.com/article19org), [facebook.com/Article19wafric](https://facebook.com/Article19wafric)

Mastodon : @article19

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