

ON WORLD POLIO DAY, WHO PAKISTAN ACKNOWLEDGES THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES TO POLIO ERADICATION EFFORTS

Islamabad, 23 October 2018 - On World Polio Day, Dr Nima Saeed Abid, Head of WHO Office in Pakistan, thanked the United Arab Emirates for their contribution to Pakistan's efforts to eradicate polio. Thanks to the support of the Emirates polio campaign managed by the United Arab Emirates Pakistan Assistance Programme (UAE-PAP), tens of millions of children have been vaccinated against polio since the launch of the campaign in 2014.

In 2017 alone, more than 12.8 million children of Pakistan's high-risk areas benefited from the United Arab Emirates' assistance through the administration of around 96 million polio drops. Between January and September 2018, with the United Arab Emirates' help, more than 92 million polio drops were given to around 13.5 million children in Pakistan.

Pakistan remains one of only 3 countries in the world where polio continues to circulate, alongside Afghanistan and Nigeria. The country has registered an overall 97% drop in wild poliovirus cases since 2014 – cases consistently dropped from 306 to 54 in 2015, 20 in 2016 and only 8 in 2017. So far this year, 6 cases have been reported from Pakistan.

The Head of WHO in Pakistan acknowledged that the generous support of the United Arab Emirates has positively contributed to Pakistan's progress in the efforts to eradicate polio since 2014. He extended his deepest gratitude and regards to the United Arab Emirates and to His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of United Arab Emirates and His Highness Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Deputy Supreme Commander of the United Arab Emirates Armed Forces for their unwavering commitment towards polio eradication campaigns in Pakistan.

The initiative of His Highness Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan in partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has provided a joint contribution of US\$ 107 million between 2014 and 2018, supporting the efforts to enhance the immunity gaps through a series of well-planned, high-quality immunization campaigns in 83 high-risk districts of Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including Tribal Districts, and Sindh.

Dr Abid said that the United Arab Emirates is one of numerous partners who have played a vital role in Pakistan's progress in the polio situation over the years. "With this support to Pakistan, I am confident country will soon reach the goal of ending polio once and for all," Head of WHO Pakistan said.

He further added that other partners and donors who have supported Pakistan's polio eradication programme over the past years include the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Germany, Rotary International, Japan, Canada, the United Kingdom, Norway, USAID, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Islamic Development Bank and Italy. On World Polio Day, the world pays tribute to all partners who have contributed to the global efforts to eradicate polio including donors, partners, programme staff, frontline polio workers and volunteers, and security personnel.

The Global Polio Eradication Initiative receives financial support from governments of countries affected by polio – private sector foundations, donor governments, multilateral organizations, private individuals, humanitarian and nongovernmental organizations and corporate partners.

Available from: <http://www.emro.who.int/pak/pakistan-news/on-world-polio-day-who-pakistan-acknowledges-the-contribution-of-the-united-arab-emirates-to-polio-eradication-efforts.html>