Kabul, 28 November 2018 – Another new polio case has been reported from Shaheed-e-Hassas district of Urozgan province, a 3-year-old boy who is now permanently paralyzed by the poliovirus. This is the second case from the same district, making the total number of polio cases in Afghanistan 20 this year so far. Fourteen cases have been reported in the south of the country and six cases in the east. From the south, nine cases have been reported in Kandahar, three cases in Helmand and two cases in Urozgan and from the east, three cases in Kunar, two cases in Nangarhar and one case in Nuristan.

The Minister of Public Health, Dr Ferozuddin Feroz, expressed his deep concern that Afghanistan now has the highest number of polio cases in the world: “We now have more polio cases than the last two years. This is serious and we as parents, community members, and a nation have an obligation to protect our children. This young boy has been needlessly paralyzed and his life forever changed before it has even started. We must do better to protect our children. We would like to stress that all parents and caregivers must repeatedly vaccinate all their children under five every time the vaccine is offered. Polio is serious and has lifelong consequences, but we have the power to eradicate it from our country and the world.”
Polio is a crippling and potentially fatal infectious disease. There is no cure and the polio vaccine is the only safe and effective way to protect children. All children should be vaccinated against polio during each campaign, until they reach the age of five. House-to-house vaccination is the only effective way to achieve polio eradication because it means every child has access to vaccination. This strategy has been implemented in all countries, and has proven efficacy. However, if parents live in areas where there is no house-to-house campaign available, they should take their children to the local health facility for free polio vaccine.

The polio vaccine is safe, even for sick and newborn children. It is very important these children
get the vaccine, because they have low immunity which makes them more susceptible to the virus.

Polio vaccination has also been strongly endorsed by national and global Islamic scholars.

Currently, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Nigeria are the only three remaining polio-endemic countries in the world.

For more information

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