



Kabul, 14 August 2017 - The Ministry of Public Health of Afghanistan, together with WHO and UNICEF, launched a new National Immunization Days campaign during which 9.9 million children under the age of 5 will be vaccinated against polio in all 34 provinces this week. Over 8.9 million children aged 6 months to 5 years will also be given vitamin A tablets.

A launch ceremony for the campaign held in Kabul yesterday was attended by H.E. Minister of Public Health Dr Ferozuddin Feroz, representatives of WHO and UNICEF as well as national media outlets. Islamic scholars attending the event highlighted that all caregivers must vaccinate their children against polio during every single vaccination campaign to ensure they are protected.

“No Afghan child should ever be paralyzed or disabled by polio. It is the duty and responsibility of all Afghans to work together to end polio so that all children are protected from this disease,” said Minister Feroz. “We call on all sides of the conflict to respect the neutrality of the polio programme and ensure the safety of polio workers as they carry out their duties,” he added.

Over 77 000 trained and dedicated frontline workers are vaccinating children in all corners of Afghanistan this week by going from house to house. On Friday, polio teams will revisit households where children were missed during the vaccinators' initial visit to ensure that all children are vaccinated and protected.

Most of Afghanistan is polio-free and the circulation of the wild poliovirus has been localized in

small, insecure areas of the country. In 2017, six polio cases have been confirmed in Afghanistan: two from Kandahar, two from Helmand, one from Kunduz while the most recent case has been reported from Zabul province. In 2016, 13 cases of polio were reported in the country, down from 20 in 2015.

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