



Mosaver is the first child in Afghanistan to receive the new Inactivated Polio Vaccine at an event attended by Minister of Public Health Dr Ferozuddin Feroz. KABUL 30 September 2015

– As

part of the Government of Afghanistan's ongoing efforts to eradicate polio and strengthen routine immunization, H.E Dr. Ferozuddin Feroz, Minister of Public Health of Afghanistan, today formally introduced the Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV) into the schedule of routine vaccinations programme for all children under the age of one.

Today's introduction of IPV into the routine immunisation schedule in Afghanistan is part of a worldwide roll-out of the vaccine across 126 countries – the largest and fastest globally coordinated vaccine introduction project in history. It is funded as part of the budget of the [Global Polio Eradication Initiative \(GPEI\)](#), and support is channeled through Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, WHO and UNICEF.

The vaccine is now available free of charge at all health facilities in the country.

The universal introduction of IPV is part of the [Polio Eradication and Endgame Strategic Plan 2013-2018](#). It contributes to the eradication of polio and secures the gains made against the disease through stronger immunisation systems, so that all children in all countries have access to vaccines. The Plan also calls for the eventual removal of oral polio vaccination following the eradication of the remaining strains of poliovirus transmission. Afghanistan - one of the two polio endemic countries in the world - has reported 12 cases of polio in 2015.

The IPV and oral polio vaccine (OPV) drops administered through the routine immunisation system will complement Polio Eradication Programme campaigns and will boost the immunity of

children against polio. IPV does not replace any of the OPV doses, so caregivers should continue to accept OPV whenever it is offered – at the health facility, at home or in the community.

“With the introduction of IPV, Afghanistan has achieved a key objective of the global Polio Endgame Plan. Continued efforts and collaboration among all partners and communities will strengthen routine immunisation and end polio in Afghanistan and the whole world,” said Dr. Ferozuddin Feroz, the Minister of Public Health. “By vaccinating your children regularly we can eradicate polio in Afghanistan,” he added.

“Provision of the IPV vaccine is a key step to protect children from polio, and this should be supported by an ongoing effort to make parents and caregivers of children aware of the importance of IPV and all other vaccines,” said Akhil Iyer, UNICEF Representative in Afghanistan. He said that UNICEF remains committed to ensuring that all children in Afghanistan receive life-saving vaccinations on time.

“The introduction of IPV is a crucial step towards securing a polio-free Afghanistan and protecting the health of children,” said Dr Richard Peeperkorn, WHO Country Representative. “IPV is an extremely safe vaccine, whether used alone or in combination with other vaccines. The use of routine immunization as the primary way to deliver IPV is critical to help sustain gains made by eradication efforts and protect children against lifelong polio paralysis around the country.”

“Polio remains a threat as long as there are cases anywhere in the world. By supporting IPV and helping countries strengthen their routine immunisation systems, Gavi is contributing to the tremendous partnership that aims to rid the world of this disease once and for all, ” added Dr Seth Berkley, CEO of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.

In Afghanistan, IPV will be administered to children at 14 weeks of age by trained health workers alongside the third dose of OPV, Pentavalent vaccine – which protects against Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis, Hepatitis B and Hib - and Pneumococcal vaccine.

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