A girl shows her pinky finger marked with indelible ink after receiving the polio vaccineKabul, 17 April 2017 - The Ministry of Public Health of Afghanistan, together with WHO and UNICEF, launched today a Sub-National Immunization Days (SNID) campaign to vaccinate over 6.8 million children under the age of 5 against polio in high-risk districts in 27 provinces around Afghanistan.

The campaign will be conducted in all provinces in the Southern and South-eastern regions, most districts in the Eastern region as well as selected high-risk districts across the country, including Kabul city. The campaign will also be carried out in Kunduz province along with four bordering provinces as a response to a polio case that was reported from the Dasht-e-Archi district of Kunduz in March.

“The most recent polio case from Kunduz, a 14-month-old girl, highlights the urgency of making sure that every single child under the age of 5 is vaccinated during every campaign, everywhere in Afghanistan. We must all play our part in ensuring that our children are healthy and stay protected from polio,” said H.E. Minister of Public Health Dr Ferozuddin Feroz.

During the campaign, over 52,000 trained polio workers will go from house to house in their communities to vaccinate children. On Friday, polio teams will re-visit households where children were missed the first time the vaccinators visited to ensure that all children are vaccinated and protected.

All caregivers who miss having their children vaccinated should visit their local health centre where the vaccine is available free of charge. The polio vaccine is safe and it does not have any side effects, even for sleeping or sick children and newborns. Polio vaccines have also been strongly endorsed by national and global Islamic scholars, including the Ulama.

Afghanistan, Pakistan and Nigeria are the only three countries in the world where polio is still circulating. Most of Afghanistan remains polio-free, but wild poliovirus continues to circulate in localized geographical areas.

Three polio cases have been reported in 2017, one from Helmand, one from Kandahar and the most recent one from Kunduz. In 2016, 13 polio cases were reported, down from 20 in 2015.

Friday 26th of April 2024 12:58:24 AM