



Afghanistan's Vice President launches a national polio campaign together with the Acting Minister of Public Health Dr Suraya Dalil and WHO Representative Dr Rik Peepkorn. Kabul 30 October – A national immunization day polio vaccination campaign was inaugurated this week in Afghanistan by the country's Vice President, Mr Mohammad Sarwar Danish, in a ceremony attended by Ministry of Public Health officials, UN partners and donor agencies. This week's campaign marks the fourth round of national polio vaccination campaigns this year.

The campaign targeted 8.9 million children under the age of five for vaccination against polio in all of Afghanistan's 34 provinces. Vitamin A was also given to children aged between six months and five years.

In his opening remarks Vice President Danish highlighted the importance of polio vaccination campaigns in protecting children from the devastating disease and called upon the public to cooperate with polio field workers to ensure their children get immunized. Acting Minister of Public Health Dr Suraya Dalil emphasized that polio eradication is one of the top priorities in the country's health programming.

WHO Representative Dr Rik Peepkorn commended the steady progress in fighting polio. He also analysed the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead to stop the transmission of wild polio virus in Afghanistan in the coming low transmission season, and emphasized the urgent need to develop a strong routine immunization system.

The vaccination campaign began with the vaccination of children with two drops of the oral polio vaccine by the Vice President, Minister of Public Health and WHO Representative.

Afghanistan is one of the three remaining polio-endemic countries globally, together with

neighbouring Pakistan, as well as Nigeria. There are currently 15 confirmed polio cases in the country. In order to stop the transmission of the polio virus and eradicate the vaccine-preventable disease, multiple rounds of vaccination campaigns are carried out every year around Afghanistan.

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