

24 April 2012 – This week Egypt has been celebrating two important immunization events – a national polio immunization campaign and Vaccination Week. The polio immunization campaign began on Saturday 21 April when the Ministry of Health and Population of Egypt, in collaboration with WHO and UNICEF, began to conduct a series of national immunization days, expected to last for four days.

Although Egypt has been polio free since 2004, immunization and surveillance activities are critical to maintaining its polio-free status. Twelve million children under the age of five are being targeted in all governorates of Egypt with the support of communities and political leaders.

As many as 80 000 health personnel are taking part in the polio campaign with immunization teams conducting either house-to-house or fixed site vaccination from almost 5000 health centres and health units throughout the country.

WHO has provided technical support in the training of vaccinators and supervisors and in strengthening acute flaccid paralysis surveillance and conducting routine immunization. UNICEF produced advocacy posters for the campaign. This campaign was widely covered and promoted by the media prior to its launch.

Egypt is also celebrating Vaccination Week 2012 in the Region from 24 to 30 April, coinciding with the first World Immunization Week. Vaccination Weeks aims to raise people's awareness of the importance of vaccination and extend vaccination coverage, especially among hard-to-reach and underserved populations. Previous campaigns have proved to be a great success.

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