



Worldwide, three countries have not yet completed polio eradication due to false propaganda against vaccination  
Cairo, 6 March 2013 – The Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Doctor Ahmad Al Tayyeb, today called for the protection of Muslim children against poliovirus transmission by ensuring they receive the required polio vaccine. He stressed the importance of increasing the awareness of the correct Islamic teachings on the subject to combat all misinformed and false beliefs, and confirmed that Al-Azhar is ready to continue to exert all efforts to enlighten Muslim individuals and communities about the rights of children to be protected against polio and all other diseases and the obligation of all Muslims to ensure that their children are protected. “Crippled children lead to a crippled Muslim Ummah” Dr Al-Tayyeb warned.

This was announced today at a meeting held at Al-Azhar during which the Grand Imam met with Muslim scholars from several countries. The scholars expressed their solidarity with the children of the Islamic world and reaffirmed their resolve to support the people, health workers and governments of the three countries where polio is not yet eradicated, namely Afghanistan, Nigeria and Pakistan.

The Global Polio Eradication Initiative, launched in 1988 by the health ministers of the Member States of the World Health Organization, has been successful in stopping the transmission of this crippling disease in all but these three countries of the world.

Except for in Afghanistan, Nigeria and Pakistan, Muslim communities and countries everywhere have eradicated polio, including 54 out of 57 member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) that have successfully interrupted transmission of wild poliovirus. This has been achieved through the application of proven eradication strategies, the administration of the safe oral polio vaccine and with financial and political support from the Islamic world.

Recognizing with grave concern the ongoing transmission of wild poliovirus in parts of Afghanistan, Nigeria and Pakistan, and the remaining political, cultural, societal and security challenges preventing all children in these areas from being vaccinated against polio, and in particular the tragic and deadly attacks against frontline health workers in parts of Pakistan and Nigeria in the past three months, Islamic scholars from several countries are meeting for two days in Cairo from 6–7 March to discuss the major obstacles preventing these countries from stopping polio transmission and trying to reach a consensus on how the Islamic leadership can help Muslim communities to overcome these barriers and ensure protection for all Muslim children.

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