



*A total of over US\$ 23 million to be made available in 2021*

- The United Arab Emirates support will contribute to the yearly operational costs needed to protect approximately 16 million children under 5 years from polio in the 84 highest-risk districts of Pakistan and provide personal protective equipment for front-line workers
- United Arab Emirates is the main funder and a long-time supporter of the polio eradication programme, having provided US\$ 200 million since 2014
- Pakistan has reported a 98% decline in cases over the past 6 months



Islamabad, 24 July 2021 – The World Health Organization (WHO), on behalf of the Polio Eradication Initiative, has announced today that the United Arab Emirates has made available a total of US\$ 23 million funding for polio campaigns and around US\$ 376 000 for the procurement of frontline worker personal protective equipment for protection against COVID-19 in 84 highest-risk districts. This funding and donation are to be utilized during 2021. It will enable the polio programme to maintain momentum to implement monthly polio campaigns targeting 16 million children in the highest-risk districts of Pakistan. Since 2014, United Arab Emirates has contributed over US\$ 200 million to polio eradication efforts in Pakistan.

Speaking on behalf of the Polio Eradication Initiative partners, Dr Palitha Mahipala, WHO Representative in Pakistan, thanked United Arab Emirates for their generous contribution.

“United Arab Emirates has firmly stood by the polio programme, with vital yearly contributions and responding to pleas for extra funding to address unforeseen challenges such as COVID-19. With their steadfast commitment to the shared goal of polio eradication, we can further strengthen our efforts to protect children from lifelong paralysis. This would not be possible without their support.”



Pakistan has reported only 1 wild polio case in the first 6 months of the year. This is a significant decrease, over 98%, compared to 59 cases during the same period last year. The Government of Pakistan is fully committed to getting the country to zero wild polio cases over the coming months. To be certified as polio-free, Pakistan is required to report that there are no children affected by the wild poliovirus over a period of 3 years.

United Arab Emirates continues its role through its Pakistan Assistance Programme (UAE-PAP)

to ensure that further gains can be made where they are needed most. The Initiative of His Highness Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan to Eradicate Polio Globally has been instrumental in driving on-the-ground eradication efforts and gains within the most vulnerable communities in Pakistan. In 2020, UAE-PAP support ensured that close to 16 million children under 5 years received protection through repeated polio campaigns as part of the umbrella Emirates Polio Campaign and all frontline workers in 84 districts received personal protective equipment and training to facilitate protection from COVID-19.

The Director of UAE-PAP, His Excellency Mr Abdulla Khalifa Alghfeli, praised the humanitarian approach and the generous support of His Highness Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the United Arab Emirates Armed Forces. Mr Alghfeli explained that His Highness's humanitarian initiative to eradicate polio is a major factor contributing to the elimination of the disease in the last reservoir of the virus in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

"The efforts and sacrifices of the field vaccination teams, who face difficult field conditions and dangerous challenges, greatly contribute to the success of the campaigns and reducing the spread of poliovirus in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan," he added.



Dr Shahzad Baig, National Coordinator of the National Emergency Operations Centre for Polio Eradication (NEOC), wholeheartedly welcomed the United Arab Emirates contribution as an important boost to ensure that the programme can control the virus through door-to-door polio campaigns.

"We are getting closer to our goal, but this is not the time to be complacent. We are re-doubling

our efforts to ensure the gains of the past don't slip away," he said.



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