



Islamabad, 25 October 2020 – The World Health Organization (WHO) marked international World Polio Day on October 24 by recognizing the contributions of the Government of Pakistan, polio workers, caregivers, civil society and donors, who are united in fight against polio in Pakistan.

While speaking at the occasion, the WHO Representative in Pakistan, Dr Palitha Mahipala, commented that “after more than 30 years of effort, the African Region was certified as free of wild polio in August this year. It’s a great and momentous achievement that we are able to celebrate this on this World Polio Day and are working hard to ensure that Pakistan can be the next country on the journey to a polio-free world.”

Dr Palitha noted that the polio eradication programme and its partners have affirmed they will remain undeterred and urged all to get behind this national cause. “Due to enormous challenges such as misconceptions about vaccines and the COVID-19 lockdowns, the efforts against polio have been affected. The polio programme, with its partners, have now been able to ramp-up activities with a revitalized resolve to end polio in Pakistan, as recently done by Africa.”

He further added that global partners, including WHO and UNICEF, have contributed much while supporting the Government of Pakistan in this noble and global cause of polio eradication. However, more was needed to end polio once and for all, he said. A key factor in its success is the hard work of over 260 000 frontline workers. While addressing the attendees Dr Palitha applauded them saying, “they are our real heroes in this effort, and with the provided support, they have made us proud by vaccinating millions of children during each campaign”.

While highlighting the role of community and parents, Dr Palitha said that now that polio immunization activities have been safely resumed in the country, it was important that every child received the necessary vaccination. He added that it was the moral and social responsibility of the community, care givers and parents to play an active role in vaccinating children against this crippling disease.

As part of the ongoing campaigns, the next subnational polio eradication campaign will start on 26 October 2020 in 128 districts in the country. In this campaign, the Pakistan polio programme will vaccinate more than 31 million children under the age of five. The subnational campaign includes 33 districts of Punjab, 33 districts of Balochistan, 41 districts/towns of Sindh, 8 districts of Gilgit Baltistan, 10 districts of AJK and one district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Moreover, all routine immunization centres have resumed services and parents are encouraged to vaccinate their children against all vaccine-preventable diseases as per the advised schedule. WHO reiterates that vaccines work to protect children from preventable diseases and are a wise choice for all parents and caregivers.

Friday 26th of April 2024 10:41:21 AM