



19 February 2016 – Surveillance officers, Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) managers, EPI and outbreak response teams and data managers from Qatar's Ministry of Public Health gathered for a 4-day workshop in Doha between 30 January and 2 February 2017 to review the national polio outbreak preparedness and response plan as part of the global recommendation by the Polio Eradication Initiative for polio-free countries.

The Director of Public Health Dr Shaikh Mohammad Al Thani expressed the importance of the close cooperation among member countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council and with WHO in the area of health in general and polio eradication efforts in particular during his opening remarks.

The Manager of Health Protection and Communicable Disease Control in the Ministry of Health of Qatar Dr Hamad Al Romaihi in his speech mentioned successful implementation of the switch from trivalent oral polio vaccine to bivalent, which was synchronized with the global action plan. He committed to start the screening of primary immune deficient patients to strengthen the acute flaccid paralysis surveillance system, which would also ensure the clearance of SABIN like type 2 virus from Qatar following the switch.

Qatar has been polio free since the 1990s thanks to the strong routine immunization system supported by a sensitive surveillance system. Luxembourg Health Report ranked State of Qatar first among Arab countries and fifteenth globally for a strong health system. Although Qatar has never been assessed to be at high risk as per the detailed risk analysis conducted by the WHO

Regional Office, population movement, including migrant workers from polio-endemic countries still poses a risk of importation of various poliovirus, especially vaccine-derived polio virus type 2.

The regional polio eradication programme with the Ministry of Public Health of Qatar reviewed and updated the outbreak preparedness and response plan and developed a roadmap to start the screening of primary immune deficient children in Qatar.

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