



On World Polio Day, WHO, UNICEF, the Government of Sudan and partners joined forces to celebrate the successes of the national polio programme and to raise awareness about the disease

30 October 2018, Khartoum, Sudan – The Government of Sudan, World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and other partners supporting the national polio programme in Sudan celebrated World Polio Day on 24 October 2018.

The celebration included a number of activities aimed at raising awareness and calling for continued support by donors to eradicate the disease.

Sudan has not reported polio cases since March 2009 and was announced polio-free in 2015 by WHO. Over 90% of the annually targeted children were reached, thanks to strong collaboration between national health authorities and partners with the generous support from donors such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Rotary International, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance, as well as the Department for International Development (DFID), United Kingdom, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation.

“Keeping Sudan polio free has been a top priority for the Government of Sudan and a key factor for the implementation of overall health security,” said His Excellency Dr Mohamed Abu Zaid

Mustafa, Federal Minister of Health. “While celebrating World Polio Day, we have to stop at the great achievements done in Sudan and express our appreciation for the role of WHO, UNICEF, and other health partners, as well as the international community for continuing to support the polio eradication activities in our country and ensuring our children are safe and well protected.”

“WHO, together with partners and counterparts, is celebrating World Polio Day with clear messages on the importance of public awareness on the disease transmission, prevention, and vaccination of each child,” said Dr Naeema Al Gasseer, WHO Representative in Sudan. “The eradication of polio is a global endeavour and to succeed, we should leave no child behind. Everyone must be immunized until this deadly disease is eradicated and the world is polio-free,” she added.

“UNICEF with the Government of Sudan and Global Polio Eradication Partners are celebrating this important day with the vision of ensuring Sudan remains polio free and having a lasting polio-free world”, said Mr Abdullah Fadil, UNICEF representative in Sudan. “The world and Sudan have the historic opportunity to prevent this terrible disease from crippling our children again, so let us all continue working together to ensure each and every child is vaccinated, including children living in areas that have been hard to reach“ he added.

WHO, UNICEF and nongovernmental health partners in Sudan will continue to support the Ministry of Health to maintain sensitivity of surveillance and increase vaccination coverage to sustain the country’s polio-free status and protect children against this crippling and fatal infectious disease.

This World Polio Day, WHO, UNICEF, and partners unite efforts and join voices to thank everyone who contributed to protect children with vaccines and fight the virus.

## **About World Polio Day**

World Polio Day was established by Rotary International to commemorate the birth of Jonas Salk, who led the first team to develop a vaccine against poliomyelitis. Use of this inactivated poliovirus vaccine and subsequent widespread use of the oral poliovirus vaccine, developed by Albert Sabin, led to the establishment of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) in 1988. Today, GPEI has reduced polio worldwide by 99.9%.

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## **About WHO**

WHO is a specialized public health organization mandated to provide the most reliable and evidence-based technical assistance, strategic and operational guidance to countries worldwide.

WHO works closely with Sudan's Ministry of Health and related sectors on daily bases to identify priorities and guide the health sector on preparedness, effective and efficient response to health and health care requirements.

[More information on WHO and its work in Sudan](#)

## **About UNICEF**

UNICEF promotes the rights and wellbeing of every child, in everything we do. Together with our partners, we work in 190 countries and territories to translate that commitment into practical action, focusing special effort on reaching the most vulnerable and excluded children, to the benefit of all children, everywhere.

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