

150th Session of the WHO Executive Board

Agenda Item 16.1&16.2: Poliomyelitis eradication and Polio transition planning& polio post-certification (Ref Docs: EB150/21 and EB150/221)

Thank you, Moderator, thank you Chair

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Rwanda has the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the 47 Member States of the Africa Region, on **Agenda Items 16.1&16.2: Poliomyelitis eradication and Polio transition planning& polio post-certification**;
2. On **Poliomyelitis eradication report**, the WHO Africa Region commends the quality of the reports submitted by the Secretariat.
3. The Africa Region notes with great satisfaction that five of the six WHO regions are independently certified as free of all wild polioviruses and hopes that the same can be achieved everywhere, with commitment of governments, support from WHO and all relevant organizations;
4. The Africa Region is concerned about the circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus which continues to be detected in 14 non-endemic countries of three Regions including the Africa region especially the west African region and this should be stopped through effective and sustainable response.
5. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the global eradication effort calls for special attention in order to build resilient health systems capable of sustaining gains and mitigating the risk of new spread of polio.
6. The African Region reiterates the call for Member States to:
 - (a) Strongly advocate for the prioritization of nOPV2 from the global stockpile for the African Region, to prevent and respond to cVDPV2 outbreaks.
 - (b) Advocate for continued financial support from Global Polio Eradication Initiative to the African Region to fully implement planned activities and sustain the gains,
 - (c) Advocate for adequate and consistent availability of routine immunization polio vaccines to boost population immunity and avoid paralysis in children.

Chair,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen

Concerning Polio transition planning & polio post-certification;

7. The WHO Africa Region commends the quality of the related report which provides an update on the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan on Polio Transition (2018–2023) within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing on integration and sustainability.
8. The Africa Region supports the approach of engaging with authorities in priority countries to revise and implement their national plans for polio transition within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, in order to sustain the gains of polio eradication, to avoid backsliding on immunization gains, and to strengthen emergency preparedness, detection and response capacities.
9. The African Region notes with satisfaction that, despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, 91% of planned deliverables of the 2020–2021 Joint Corporate Workplan were completed or have progressed.
10. Efforts and specific priorities of each region are needed, with a strong focus on effective surveillance, coordinated planning, action and monitoring, resource mobilization, strategic communications, gradual integration or absorption of polio workforce in the entire public health human resource, and high-level advocacy;
11. To conclude, the WHO Africa Region advocates for Member States and Development partners to continue mobilizing resources for implementation of national polio transition plans in the context of covid-19 and looks forward to EB guidance on mitigating programmatic risks in countries that are transitioning out of support from the Global Polio Eradication Initiative.
12. I thank you for your kind attention.