

Egypt's Efforts in Poliomyelitis Eradication

Egypt would like to thank the WHO for all its efforts toward Poliomyelitis Eradication.

Polio is considered as a serious disease, and is classified globally as a health emergency. It affects the health of children, families, and societies. Egypt has proudly taken great steps forward towards the implementation of the Polio vaccination program. Our efforts were crowned by declaring Egypt free of polio with the last reported case in 2004.

Since then, Egypt has maintained its zero polio cases record, manifested by the submission of the annual file to the Regional Committee for Polio Eradication, that includes the following:

- **Rates of vaccination coverage for the polio vaccine;** where the coverage rate for routine vaccinations has exceeded 95%.
- **Indicators for monitoring acute flaccid paralysis (AFP);** where AFP is monitored in children of ages less than 15 years or in other cases suspected by health experts to be diagnosed with polio regardless of its age.
- **Environmental surveillance;** as Egypt is considered one of the leading countries in this domain, in which its introduction contributes to the detection of the importation of the virus or of the vaccine derived polio virus.

It is worth noting that the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the public health services globally, including routine immunizations especially in the latter half of year 2020, which led to the appearance of positive environmental samples, in both developing and developed countries.

As for Egypt, positive environmental samples of the type2 vaccine-derived virus came out at the end of 2020. It was imported from some neighboring countries. Containment measures were implemented swiftly. Moreover, national campaigns were conducted throughout the years 2020 and 2021; and a national campaign using nOPV vaccine was carried out in December 2022.

The national campaign to vaccinate against bivalent polio was implemented during the period 27-30 March 2022 to vaccinate children up to 5 years old (16,309,677 children were vaccinated with a coverage rate of 98.7%).

A limited vaccination campaign against polio (nOPV) was carried out in governorates of Qena and Luxor with two doses; the first dose was administered during the period 8-12 May 2022(

772,460 children were vaccinated with a coverage rate of 100.3%), while the second dose was administered during the period 12-15 June 2022 (765,401 children were vaccinated with a coverage rate of 99.1%).

In the same context, a limited vaccination campaign was set out in the governorates of Cairo and Giza, during the period 9-13 October 2022 (3,295,200 children were vaccinated, with a coverage rate of 98.6%). Furthermore, a national campaign was conducted during the period 11-14 December 2022 to vaccinate children of ages up to 5 years old (15,900,339 children were vaccinated with a coverage rate of 98.1%).

The cross-border activities coordination plays an important role in quarantine efforts, it aims at the vaccination of all arrivals or departures passengers from countries reported with positive polio cases or its environmental samples. Furthermore, the sensitivity of AFP surveillance is relatively higher in border governorates, this is achieved by means of the provision of the relevant case definitions to report such cases and to collect samples from their related contacts.

In conclusion, despite the fact that poliomyelitis still represents a global health- risk, we are delighted to praise the significant success achieved as a result of the WHO endgame strategy in this regard. Henceforth, Egypt urges the full funding and implementation of this strategy for the years 2022 -2026 , putting forward the objective of the realization of a world free of polio viruses.

Thank You,