

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)
73RD WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY (RESUMED)
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND – VIRTUAL MEETING
NOVEMBER 9 -14, 2020

Polio Eradication and Transition

Agenda Item 13.5

UNITED STATES WRITTEN STATEMENT:

Polio Eradication

- The United States congratulates the Africa Region on its wild-polio-free certification in August 2020. This milestone is an incredible public health achievement for the continent and a huge step forward on the road to global polio eradication. This major achievement would not have happened without the dedicated, hard work of thousands of health workers, traditional and religious leaders, parents, community and country leaders.
- The United States remains concerned about circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 outbreaks (cVDPV2) in three WHO regions, especially Africa. We fully support roll-out of a novel oral polio vaccine type 2 (nOPV2), through the WHO Emergency Use Listing procedure. The data indicating nOPV2 to have a substantially lower risk of seeding new cVDPV2 outbreaks promises to bring these outbreaks under control and end them. We emphasize the need for affected Member States to conduct high quality immunization rounds to maximize the benefit of this new vaccine and to sustain surveillance to monitor the introduction and be alert for any adverse events.
- Despite the effects of COVID-19 on the global polio eradication program, the United States fully supports the Global Polio Eradication Initiative and urges all Member States to do what is necessary to free the world from both wild and vaccine-derived polioviruses so that no child will face paralysis from this vaccine preventable disease.

Polio Transition

- In 2014, polio eradication staff and assets were rapidly redeployed to fight the Ebola outbreak in Nigeria, stopping a potentially catastrophic outbreak in Lagos. This year, these polio assets were again shifted toward the global fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, playing an essential role in containing the pandemic in some of the world's most vulnerable populations. It shows the importance of continuing to plan for a post-polio world where there is local capacity and resources to respond to predictable and new health crises, support and strengthen health systems, and sustain population immunity and surveillance. Countries will need to report on polio, under IHRs, for the foreseeable future. The United States urges other Member States to join us in continuing to fully support polio transition planning.

WORD COUNT: 346