



**Republic of the Gambia
Ministry of Health
The Quadrangle
Banjul**

SEVENTY-EIGHT WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

STATEMENT OF THE MINISTER, GENEVA 2026

Agenda Item 14.3	Poliomyelitis
Documents	A79/5
Requested action	Note the report
Time limit:	3 MINS
Commission	A

Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

On behalf of the Government of The Gambia, I align with the statement delivered by Cameroon on behalf of the African Region and thank the Director-General for the report.

The Gambia joins the international community in expressing deep concern over the continued international spread of poliovirus, which remains a Public Health Emergency of International Concern.

It is gratifying to report that The Gambia recorded its last laboratory-confirmed case of wild poliovirus in 1986 which also marked the final transmission of wild poliovirus in the country. This success reflects strong and sustained political commitment to immunization since the establishment of the Expanded Programme on Immunization in May 1979. The Government has ensured sustainable financing through a dedicated budget line for routine vaccine procurement and has consistently met its co-financing obligations since signing the Gavi Partnership Agreement in 2014.

In line with global policy, The Gambia successfully transitioned from trivalent oral polio vaccine to bivalent OPV in 2016. Inactivated polio vaccine was introduced into the routine immunization schedule in 2015, with IPV2 added in 2021. These

efforts, combined with the dedication of frontline health workers, continuous availability of safe and effective vaccines, strong partnerships, and active community engagement, have enabled the country to achieve and sustain high routine immunization coverage, including DPT3, and maintain its polio free status.

In 2005, The Gambia submitted its polio eradication documentation to the African Regional Certification Commission and was subsequently certified polio-free. High-quality Acute Flaccid Paralysis surveillance has been implemented since 2002 and was complemented by Environmental Surveillance introduced in 2021. This led to the detection of circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 in 2021 and a subsequent importation in 2024, both of which were successfully contained through timely outbreak response campaigns.

Finally, maternal and child health services in The Gambia are provided free of charge, with no barriers to immunization. As part of post-COVID-19 recovery, Periodic Intensification of Routine Immunization and Big Catch-Up activities continue to target zero-dose and under-immunized children. National polio eradication committees remain active, and the country continues to meet all reporting and containment obligations.

Thank you.