Statement by the Government of Bangladesh

148th Session of WHO Executive Board
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Item-15: Poliomyelitis eradication and Polio transition planning and polio post-certification

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We thank the Director General for providing us with an update on poliomyelitis eradication as well as on the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan on Polio Transition.

The world has made remarkable progress to eradicate Polio. It is now on the brink of becoming only the second human disease in history to be eradicated. In this regard, we commend the concerted efforts made by the Governments, WHO, Global Polio Eradication Initiative, Gavi and other relevant partners and donors to reach this point.

Mr. Chair,

We understand that the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly disrupted the work of combating vaccine-preventable diseases, including poliomyelitis. Therefore, it would be crucial now to repair immunization systems affected by the pandemic through mobilizing adequate funds and resources.

We also recognize the valuable contributions of polio workers to COVID-19 response. Whatever the situation is, we must continue to push to rid the world of all forms of polio, close the immunity gap and contribute towards universal health coverage.

Bangladesh was certified polio-free in 2014. As one of the 16 priority countries, we are working towards implementation of the polio transition plan dividing it into three phases. However, funding remains a key challenge and an obstacle to implementing this plan.
Mr. Chair,

In light of the working documents and taking account of our own experiences, we wish to underline a few points:

First, efforts should be continued to implement appropriate immunization and surveillance strategies, including through environmental surveillance as to complement AFP surveillance.

Second, the emergency preparedness and response plan should include the provision of responding to any outbreak of poliovirus of any origin.

Third, effective collaboration between the Government and the partners and donors would be the key to ensure the required resource mobilization and capacity building.

And Finally, WHO should consider facilitating vaccine manufactures of developing countries to produce bOPV and IPV.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.