Agenda item 15: Poliomyelitis
15.1 Poliomyelitis eradication
15.2 Polio transition planning and polio post-certification
Document EB148/22 and EB148/23

PROPOSED ACTIONS:
The Board will be invited to note the report update on: efforts to interrupt remaining wild poliovirus transmission; the responses to outbreaks due to circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 and the introduction of novel oral polio vaccine type 2; the impact of COVID-19 on the polio eradication programme; a review of the governance of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative and the process for developing a new strategy; and the financing situation at end-2020

PHILIPPINE INTERVENTION:

Thank you, Chair.

The Philippines declared a polio outbreak in 2019 due to detection of vaccine-derived poliovirus both in environmental and human samples. A National Comprehensive Outbreak Response was conducted to avert poliovirus transmission through the conduct of several rounds of Synchronized Polio Outbreak Response Immunization using both monovalent OPV Type 2 and bivalent Oral Polio Vaccines, heightened AFP surveillance and expansion of environment surveillance.

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly disrupted immunization especially in areas with documented high number of COVID-19 community transmission. Caregivers were not bringing their children to health facilities; human resources handling the immunization program and surveillance officers were utilized to respond to COVID-19; and other health service providers were also infected of COVID-19.

An integrated nationwide supplemental immunization activity was conducted in phases to mitigate the effects of the pandemic on immunization service and minimize the risk of SARS CoV2 transmission during vaccination sessions. We combined the delivery of measles-rubella vaccine with the bivalent oral polio vaccine, while at the same time ensuring that vaccinators, vaccinees, caregivers and support personnel are protected from COVID-19 infection. Interim guidelines on immunization in the context of COVID-19 outbreak were also issued.

The country conveys its gratitude to WHO and UNICEF for their unwavering support to the polio response amid the COVID-19 pandemic. We are also grateful for the acknowledgement of the WHO on the Philippines’ response to the outbreaks of circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 1 and type 2 in the midst of the pandemic.

Thank you.