

STATEMENT ON STATUS OF POLIO ERADICATION OCTOBER 2009

Nigeria recognizes that it remains one of the endemic countries yet to interrupt transmission of Wild polio Virus (WPV). However, over the last one year, there has been renewed commitment as exemplified at the highest level by the President of the Federal Republic.

New strategies have been evolved and implemented which are clearly yielding results that promise to ensure the interruption by December 2009.

Key among these strategies are:

1. Increased engagement of State Governors through the Governors' Forum
 - i Abuja commitment during Mr. Bill Gates visit to Nigeria.
 - ii Public Media pronouncements and support for the PEI.
 - iii Joint flagging off and advocacy days by State Governors simultaneously across the country.
 - iv Increased resources allocation by State for PEI and PHC, evolvement of policy to promote immunization and mandating of LGAs under them to monitor, supervise and provide resources for EPI.
2. Engagement of Traditional Leaders in the Northern part of the country where you have the highest burden of WPV
 - i The northern traditional rulers under the leadership of the Sultan have constituted a Task Team on PHC and PEI.
 - ii Using traditional structures, they have significantly impacted on the mobilization of their communities, identification of missed children, resolution of non compliance and ensuring community level monitoring of immunization plus campaign.
3. Intensified re-engagement of community based groups, religious groups and the media for PEI. This has served to increase awareness and enhanced acceptance of OPV.
4. Sustained surveillance and critical review of epidemiological data to determine which type of vaccine is utilized for campaigns at various times of the year. In 2009, Nigeria has had three (3) quality mOPV1 rounds, 2 tOPV and 1 mOPV3 rounds.
5. The progress being made is evident in current national data which indicated the following:
 - i 40% reduction of WPV from 613 cases in August 2008 to 370 for the same period in 2009 (21st August, 2009).
 - ii WPV1 which is the more virulent has undergone significant reduction of 88% from 562 to 69 in August of 2008 and 2009 respectively.

Unfortunately however, there has been an upsurge of the less virulent WPV3 both in the high risk states and previously polio Free states.

- i Zero dose children have significantly reduced to 11% in 2009 from 36% five years ago.
- ii Children that have received more than 3 doses have also increased from 30% to 64% over the last 5 years.
- iii As at 21st August 2009 Kano, Katsina and Jigawa States which used to have the highest burden of WPV, have had no WPV1 cases in the past 6 months.

Based on information available to us, the draft report of the DG-WHO Independent Evaluation Team indicated progress in our PEI efforts.

LGAs who are the constitutional implementers of PHC in Nigeria are gradually taking ownership of the Immunization programme and we expect improvement of their active involvements and supervision during campaigns.

There has been slow but important improvement in our routine immunization.

Based on the progress being made, it is the hope of Nigeria that the Regional Committee would share optimism of interrupting WPV transmission by December 2009. We therefore call on all our partners and the International Community not to rest on its oars in supporting Nigeria on this last mile.

May I seek the indulgence of Your Excellencies to increase further commitment to the Polio Eradication efforts.

Thank you, Sirs.
5th October, 2009

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