



Statement by Pakistan at WHO Executive Board (150th Session), “Poliomyelitis eradication” on 27 January 2022

Mr. Chairman and distinguished delegates,

Pakistan is pleased to report exceptional progress regarding Wild Polio Virus (WPV) cases. Most parts of the country recorded zero polio cases. The last Wild Polio Virus case was reported on January 27, 2021 (*in Killa Abdullah, Balochistan*). This represents a sharp reduction from 84 cases in 2020 and 147 cases in 2019. With respect to circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 (CVPDV2), eight cases were reported in 2021 as compared to 135 cases in 2020.

The Polio programme has successfully completed four high-quality national campaigns, each reaching more than 40 million children under-five with lifesaving vaccines during 2021. Overall, there are promising signs from Pakistan. However, recent positive environmental samples of Wild Polio Virus (WPV) show a high-risk of resurgence of cases.

The province of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa remains the main focus for polio eradication in Pakistan. No wild polio case was reported. There was only one case of circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 (CVDPV2) isolated in the province in 2021. However, South Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa has witnessed missed circulation, which means there are areas where the virus may be present but is going undetected.

Mr. Chairman,

The Government of Pakistan remains strongly committed to the eradication efforts; it recognizes the need to address gaps in program performance and is determined to build on this progress made.

To address the multitude of challenges, a comprehensive, action plan has been prepared for South KP, which is currently being implemented with a priority to provide high-quality OPV rounds.

Mr. Chairman,

We are also aware of the risks of increasing cross-border circulation of the virus between Afghanistan and Pakistan. We are therefore focused on further strengthening our surveillance, performance and response.

I thank you.