

# MEDIA FACT-FILE

POLIO ERADICATION

Volume 9, March 2013



## Islamic scholars appeal for urgent action to stop polio

Islamic scholars from several countries met in Cairo, Egypt on 6 and 7 March and called for urgent action to complete polio eradication. "Crippled children lead to a crippled Muslim Ummah" (in Arabic meaning 'nation' or 'community'), warned the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Doctor Ahmad Al Tayyeb. Al-Azhar is Sunni Islam's highest seat of learning and the chief centre of Islamic and Arabic learning in the world.

Expressing their solidarity with children, the scholars reaffirmed their resolve to support people,

health workers and governments of Afghanistan, Nigeria and Pakistan - the three countries where polio still exists.

Recognizing with grave concern the ongoing transmission of wild poliovirus in parts of Afghanistan, Nigeria and Pakistan, and the political, cultural, societal and security challenges preventing all children in these areas from being vaccinated against polio, and in particular the tragic and deadly attacks against frontline health workers in parts of Pakistan and Nigeria in recent months, the scholars discussed ways on how the Islamic leadership can



Islamic scholars at a meeting in Cairo call for protection of Muslim children against polio.

help these countries overcome obstacles preventing them from stopping polio transmission and ensure protection for all children.

For more details please visit <http://www.polioeradication.org/tabid/488/iid/279/Default.aspx>

## Raina launches campaign to strengthen Routine Immunization for polio free India

"Vaccination is important for a child for a healthy life," cricket star Suresh Raina said launching the 'Nurturing Trees, Nurturing Lives'



Suresh Raina and UNICEF India Representative Louis-Georges Arsenault plant a sapling at the launch of the 'Nurturing Trees, Nurturing Lives' campaign in Delhi.

campaign in Delhi on February 24, on the first anniversary of India being removed from the polio endemic countries' list by the World Health Organization. Till date nearly 3,800 saplings have been planted in Delhi by youth and children, pledging to spread awareness about polio vaccination and routine immunization.

"This is a campaign by the youth to spread the message that every child needs to be nurtured and protected against vaccine preventable diseases, just as a sapling needs to be watered and cared for to grow into a healthy tree," said UNICEF

India Representative Mr Louis-Georges Arsenault.

UNICEF-led Social Mobilization Network in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, NSS volunteers and students of Kendriya Vidyalaya's will plant nearly 36,000 saplings in ten high priority states during the year-long campaign.

The campaign has been launched under the banner of 'India Unite To End Polio Now', an Aidmatrix Foundation and UNICEF initiative, in partnership with Adani Group and the Times of India.

With India's remarkable progress against polio, the polio

eradication programme priorities have shifted to addressing polio associated risk factors to prevent poliovirus importation, the most important being boosting Routine Immunization coverage.

### NEXT POLIO ROUND

April 7, 2013 - Sub-National polio immunization day (SNID) in Bihar, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh; some parts of Haryana, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand and West Bengal; and migratory population in Chandigarh, Gujarat and Punjab.

### GLOBAL POLIO UPDATE

So far in 2013, ten wild poliovirus cases have been reported from Pakistan (5), Afghanistan (1) and Nigeria (4). This compares to 25 cases reported from these 3 countries and Chad for the corresponding period last year. In 2012, 223 cases were reported globally from 5 countries - Pakistan (58), Afghanistan (37), Nigeria (122), Chad (5) and Niger (1).

\* WHO data as of 14 March 2012 for 2012 data and 12 March 2013 for 2013 data.

## Ghulam Nabi Azad felicitated for 2-years polio free India

Minister for Health and Family Welfare Mr Ghulam Nabi Azad received a token of recognition from UNICEF, WHO and the GAVI Alliance on completion of two years of polio-free India, during the 'Call to Action Summit' in Tamil Nadu from 7-9 February, 2013.

"We are very close to eradicating polio from the planet and great progress is being made every day," said Helen Evans, Deputy CEO of GAVI Alliance, while presenting the memento along with Dr. Geeta Rao Gupta, Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF and Dr Elizabeth Mason, Director - Maternal, Newborn & Child Health, WHO.



Mr Ghulam Nabi Azad receiving a memento in recognition of India's efforts to eradicate polio.

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