



Expanded Program
on Immunization
Government of Pakistan



Ministry of National Health Services
Regulations & Coordination
Government of Pakistan

R E P O R T

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Polio Vaccine Donation to Pakistan

11th July, 2014



Federal EPI Cell

Ministry of National Health Services Regulations and Coordination, Islamabad.

Prologue;

In response to the travel restrictions, under International Health Regulation (IHR-2005) imposed on Pakistani International Travelers by the World Health Organization (WHO) the Pakistani Government took seriously its responsibilities as a signatory to the International Health Regulations, 2005 (IHR) being fully committed to their implementation in letter and spirit.

Ministry of National Health Services Regulation and Coordination has already taken several measures to implement the IHR Temporary Recommendations made by the World Health Organization Director-General relating to the public health emergency of international concern caused by the spread of poliovirus from Pakistan.

In the above regard inside the country, amongst various other interventions, A resolution was passed in National Assembly unanimously, seeking joint efforts for elimination of polio diseases from the country. The resolution, moved by Minister of State for National Health Service Mrs. Saira Afzal Tarar, called for immediate launch of a vigorous anti-polio vaccination program which was approved unanimously. It was said all the lawmakers should monitor the drive in their respective constituencies. Majority of the MNAs agreed that not to administer polio drops to children is a criminal offense. They stressed upon the need for legislation to ensure the vaccination.

While on international front during the World Health Assembly in April, 2014 Mrs. Saira Afzal Tarar State Minister ensured her agenda's top points includes explaining Pakistan's position and pledge for assistance. Hence during various corner meetings, Saudi Officials on the forum were also taken on board whom assured to help their brotherly country in that regard.

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Assistance;

The meeting between Honorable State Minister Mrs. Saira Afzal Tarar with the Saudi Diplomats in the World Health Assembly resulted in a promising gesture in form of a visit of Mr. Jassim Mohammad Al Khaldi, Charge d Affairs of Royal Embassy of Kingdom of Saudia Arabia in Islamabad to the Federal EPI Cell Islamabad to officialy sign the MOU of over 10 million doses of Polio vaccine donation to Pakistan on 11th July, 2014.

Highlight of the Visit;

- A ceremony was held in the Conference Room of Federal EPI Cell, M/o NHSR&C to welcome **Mr. Jassim Mohammad Al Khaldi**, Charge d Affairs of Royal Embassy of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Islamabad regarding handing over the 10 million doses of OPV.
- Dr. Ejaz Ahmad Khan, NPM EPI welcomed the honorable guest on behalf of EPI Programme.
- All staff members of EPI Programme were present on the occasion.
- The hall was decorated with Saudi Pak Friendship symbols.
- Various Saudi and Pakistani Electronic/ print media persons were present to cover the event.
- NPM, EPI specifically mentioned that Pakistan is struggling hard to eradicate Polio and this assistance will inshAllah enable us to achieve our goal.

- NPM, EPI specially expressed a gesture of gratitude to for the kindness of all Saudi brothers
- Mr. Jassim on behalf of Saudi government assured the management of EPI all possible future assistance for the eradication of Polio from Pakistan.
- After this NPM EPI and Charge d Affairs of Royal Embassy of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia signed a formal MOU regarding the supply of OPV doses.
- A symbolic OPV Kit was handed over to the NPM, EPI by the Saudi Official.
- Later while talking to international and local media **Mr. Jassim** said that we always have good working relations with our brotherly country Pakistan. We do hope that Pakistan will soon be a Polio Free country. We want Pakistani Children to have a healthy future.
- About the efficacy of OPV he said that this vaccine is according to the specifications of WHO and there is no harm to vaccinate the children.
- The Saudi Official also stressed on the fact that all stakeholders specially the media should help out to remove the misconceptions about the Polio Vaccination. From Islamic point of view we should do all possible actions for the better health of our Children.
- He also added that this specific donation of 10 M doses of OPV will help the Health Ministry of Pakistan to arrange the needful Polio Vaccination for the international travelers from the Pakistani Airports.
- Dr. Ejaz Ahmed elaborated the background of the good gesture of Saudi government. He said that EPI Program was striving hard to provide free of cost immunization services to the target population of children/ women as per WHO standards. We do have congenial assistance from the partner agencies. He further said that 10 m doses of OPV will boost the Federal Reserve available in main warehouse of EPI. This stock will enable us to vaccinate the international travelers. For This purpose he said that M/o NHSR&C had already issued an Advisory asking the international travelers to get polio drops from the designated hospitals 4 weeks prior to the date of travel and get the card. This will help them to avert the undue delay at the airports.
- Answering a question of Reporter NPM EPI said that special arrangements are being made to cover the children of IDPs in close consultation with KPK govt. In that regard a team comprising of technical EPI Staff members visited the camps and shared a plan with the KP authorities.
- The NPM Concluded by mentioning that These 10 million doses will fulfill the vaccination requirement of Pakistani travelers for almost a year.
- At the end **Dr. Ejaz** thanked the media personal for coming on a short notice.

Conclusion;

- Mr. Jassim Mohammad Al Khaldi and Dr. Ejaz Ahmed Khan held parallel sessions with the media to update them on the details.