



Coming a long way - together

WHO South-East Asia Region Certified Polio-free

27 March 2014

No single country can be certified as polio-free; a WHO region as a whole is certified, after all its countries have not registered a case of wild poliovirus for 3 years in the presence of high-quality surveillance.

This is a tribute to the 11 Member States of the WHO South-East Asia Region- representing a quarter of the world's population- and their efforts to achieve this historic public health milestone.

NO
MORE
POLIO

Foreword

The certification of polio eradication in the WHO South-East Asia Region on 27 March 2014 is the celebration of a truly remarkable achievement in public health.

With this, the Region- home to one quarter of the world's population- has become the fourth WHO region to reach this goal, after the Region of the Americas, the Western Pacific Region and the European Region.

Achievement of this status demonstrates the commitment and determination of our Member States and partners to eradicate or eliminate diseases that pose a public health threat. This success is an inspiration and a beacon of hope.

This success must also be attributed to the hundreds of thousands of frontline health workers, volunteers and community members whose hard work and dedication have brought us here.

Certification of polio-free status is a powerful reminder of what we can achieve when we work together. We should now be ready to tackle other important health problems in the Region. As we come together to fight these diseases, the success of polio eradication will be a reminder for all of us that there is no limit to what we can achieve.

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Regional Director, WHO South-East Asia



Introduction

The global decision to eradicate polio was based, among other aspects, on the availability of an affordable and effective vaccine. Immunization, through strong routine delivery systems and special vaccination campaigns, and high-quality surveillance are the pillars of polio eradication worldwide. Political will, community involvement, a well-trained and motivated staff, effective communications and partnerships are vital components of this effort.

While the basic eradication principles are implemented by all Member States, the goal was achieved through diverse and unique approaches in each country. Countries of the WHO South-East Asia Region are featured in this book along with their innovative approaches. The book symbolizes the journey of polio eradication in WHO's South-East Asia Region.

And this is just the beginning! It is time to use the polio eradication experience to accelerate vaccine-preventable disease control, strengthen health systems, and ensure that no child or community is out of reach of the health services.



Every Child, Everywhere, Every Time

Bangladesh

Multi-sectoral coordination:

Under the leadership of government, various governmental and non-governmental organizations and civil society participated in polio vaccination campaigns engaging 600 000 volunteers to mobilize the communities. Health messages were promoted in innovative ways including advocacy by religious and community leaders, through micro-credit programmes and by mobile phones. Children also joined as boy and girl guides.



Bhutan

Reaching over the mountains:

As a component of Gross National Happiness, affordable and accessible health care is central to the national policy of Bhutan. The Constitution of Bhutan charges the Royal Government with providing free access to basic public health services in both modern and traditional medicine. Immunization reaches the most far-flung places in Bhutan.



Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Family doctor system:

Besides an extensive network of hospitals and polyclinics, health services are delivered by section doctors working with the communities. This includes immunization services at the primary care level. This section doctor set-up, where a single physician is responsible for an area containing 100-200 households or 300-400 individuals, forms the foundation of the health-care system.

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