



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*"If anyone saves a life, it shall be as though
he had saved the lives of all mankind." (Al-Maeda:32)*

Statement of the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Islamic Advisory Group for Polio Eradication

**Organisation of Islamic Cooperation
Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
14 November 2018**

Praise be to Allah and prayers and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah and on his kin and companions.

The **Islamic Advisory Group for Polio Eradication (IAG)** held its fifth annual meeting on 14 November 2018 at the headquarters of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, under the co-chairmanship of Al Azhar Al Sharif and the International Islamic Fiqh Academy (IIFA) and the participation of the other two core partners, the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) and the OIC. Through the fifth annual meeting the IAG:

1. Reaffirms its commitment to the global polio eradication initiative and protection of children against all vaccine-preventable diseases, and reiterates its trust in the safety and effectiveness of all routine childhood vaccinations as a life-saving tool which protects children and acknowledges that it conforms to Islamic Shariah;
2. Commends and appreciates the efforts made by the governments, communities and parents of polio-infected countries in curbing endemic transmission of the disease in Afghanistan, Nigeria and Pakistan, where the disease is now restricted to the smallest geographical areas ever; as well as in countries affected by polio outbreaks,
3. Commends the tremendous efforts made by health and frontline workers everywhere to protect children from polio as well as other infectious diseases, and encourages respect and support for their efforts;
4. Urges the Governments of Afghanistan, Nigeria and Pakistan to continue playing their leadership roles at all levels to fully implement national emergency action plans, and to ensure the engagement of all Islamic scholars, community leaders and mosque imams;

5. Refers to the OIC Strategic Health Programme of Action 2014-2023, and will ensure alignment and support in its implementation, notably in the programme's thematic areas relevant to the IAG's expanded mandate, and assign the executive committee to follow up on this;
6. Urges the Ministries of Health to continue collaboration with technical organizations such as UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO) to further fast track efforts towards polio eradication;
7. Appreciates the ongoing and critical support provided by the IsDB, and encourages other international development partners, notably Member States of the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Islamic Solidarity Fund and others, to join hands to eradicate polio as well as supporting the expanded mandate of IAG
8. Appreciates the outstanding commitment and support of Al Azhar Al Sharif for the goal of polio eradication, and its lead role towards developing the manuals for training expatriate students from priority countries on polio eradication and other maternal and child health issues
9. Commends the role of the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) Pakistan and the Islamic University in Uganda (IUIU) on promoting health and special initiatives like polio eradication, and encourages other Islamic universities affiliated with the OIC, especially the Islamic University of Niger and the International Islamic University Malaysia to join the effort;
10. Notes the ongoing efforts to engage Islamic NGOs approved by national governments in endeavor to reach the underserved populations with the maternal and child health initiatives including routine immunization and other lifesaving health interventions;
11. Reiterates its support specifically to the Government and people of Indonesia for their efforts to eliminate measles and rubella (MR) nationally, and extends similar support to all other OIC Member States planning to intensify expanded outreach to underserved populations with MR vaccines and other lifesaving vaccines;
12. Underscores its commitment to engage in high-level advocacy visits to priority countries to offer strategic support;
13. Appreciates the support of global, regional, national and local media outlets, including social media networks, for highlighting the importance of vaccination and countering baseless rumors about community-based health interventions; and encourages the positive use of social media in promoting health related initiatives including vaccination campaigns;
14. Notes that the upcoming low poliovirus transmission season in Afghanistan, Nigeria and Pakistan, which will run from the last quarter of 2018 through the second quarter of 2019, will provide the best opportunity to stop polio, and hence affirms the IAG's willingness to support all religious scholars, health organizations and Governments in their efforts to interrupt transmission during this period with special focus on high risk communities and areas;
15. Reaffirms the commitment of the Executive Committee of the IAG to advocate with the leadership of Islamic institutions and concerned Governments to ensure their ongoing commitment for polio eradication and support for the IAG expanded mandate; and,

16. Expresses its gratitude to the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the OIC for their outstanding commitment and support for the goal of polio eradication, and for hosting the fifth annual meeting of the IAG.