



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 Sixth Annual Meeting of the Islamic Advisory Group for Polio Eradication

Al Azhar Al Sharif
Cairo, Egypt
4 September 2019

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 sixth annual meeting on 4 September 2019 at Al Azhar Al Sharif in Cairo, Egypt under the co-chairmanship of Al Azhar Al Sharif and the International Islamic Fiqh Academy and with the participation of the other two core partners, namely the Islamic Development Bank and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation. Through the sixth annual meeting the IAG:

1. Refers to the OIC Strategic Health Programme of Action 2014-2023 to 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;
2. Reaffirms its commitment towards the global polio eradication initiative and particularly reiterates its trust in the safety and effectiveness of the poliovirus vaccine as a preventative and life-saving tool which protects children;
3. Notes with concern the persistence of poliovirus circulation in pockets of missed children in Afghanistan and Pakistan and that some of those children are missed due to the spread of rumors and misconceptions which led to the refusal of the family or parents;
4. Observes with concern the ban on vaccination activities in parts of Afghanistan and urge the concerned parties to facilitate these activities for the safety of all children;
5. Stresses and recalls one of the key principles of Islamic Shariah that all children, boys and girls alike, have the right to live, thrive and attain their full potential. This guides the implementation of Islamic provisions for children in all matters including health and urges all parents and caregivers to take up their religious duties and immunize their children against polio and all

other vaccine-preventable diseases for the health of their children and communities, as guided by the teachings of Islam;

6. Acknowledges that the polio vaccine is halal and does not contradict with Islamic Shariah;
7. Commends the tremendous efforts, motivation and commitment made by health and frontline workers everywhere to build close relationships with their communities and protect children from polio as well as other infectious diseases, and stresses respect and support for their efforts;
8. Supports the efforts made by the governments, communities and parents of polio endemic countries in stopping transmission of the disease in Afghanistan and Pakistan and to continue with their commitment to implement accelerated and concerted national emergency action plans;
9. Urges the ministries of health to continue collaboration with technical organizations such as UNICEF and the World Health Organization to implement and formulate, where appropriate, national emergency action plans, programmes and strategies aimed at reaching persistently missed children to fast track efforts towards polio eradication;
10. Calls upon all OIC Member States, the international community, civil society and philanthropic organizations to cooperate, support and participate in efforts to end polio, while recognizing that strengthened availability and effective allocation of financial resources are required to ensure that a polio-free world is realized;
11. Appreciates the ongoing and critical support provided by the Islamic Development Bank and encourages other international development partners, notably the 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;
12. Encourages enhanced partnership and coordination with civil society institutions and Islamic NGOs to rapidly engage in advocacy and awareness-raising about the benefits and importance of early childhood health initiatives including routine immunization and other lifesaving health interventions;
13. Appreciates the support of global, regional, national and local media outlets, including social media networks, in sensitizing parents and local communities to the importance of polio vaccination and other life-saving vaccines;
14. Expresses its gratitude to the Government of Egypt and Al Azhar Al Sharif for their outstanding commitment and support for the goal of polio eradication, and for hosting the sixth annual meeting of the IAG.