

THE ISLAMIC ADVISORY GROUP

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IG urges parents to vaccinate children during fourth annual meeting ...



Participants of the fourth annual IAG meeting at Al Azhar Al Sharif headquarters.

Islamic scholars and health experts urged parents and caretakers to vaccinate all children against polio and vaccine preventable diseases, and reiterated their trust in the vaccine and its compliance with Islamic Shariah. The call came during IAG's fourth annual meeting that was hosted by Al Azhar Al Sharif in Cairo, Egypt on 22 November under the auspices of Grand Imam Dr Ahmed El-Tayyib.

The inaugural session of the meeting was addressed by H.E. Dr Abbas Shouman, Deputy of Al Azhar; Dr Shawky Allam, the Grand Mufti of Egypt; Dr Abdulqahir Qamar from the International Islamic Fiqh Academy;

H.E. Ambassador Muhammad Naeem Khan from the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC); Dr Albashier Eltayeb Sallam from the Islamic Development Bank; and Mr Hatem El Khodary from the World Health Organization's Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean. The meeting was also attended by H.E. Dr Najibullah Mojadidi, Senior Advisor to the President of Afghanistan, and other representatives of the governments of Pakistan and Somalia as well as officers from these WHO and UNICEF country offices.

IAG's activities during the previous year were discussed and its work plan

for 2018 was endorsed including those activities related to IAG's expanded mandate into maternal and child health and routine immunization. The meeting also witnessed the launch by Dr El-Tayyib of a new training manual for students of religious studies. The manual provides practical guidance on how to engage with local communities to advocate for vaccination as well as other maternal and child health issues.

A statement issued by meeting participants reaffirmed the group's commitment to polio eradication and thanked the health workers and Islamic scholars who are helping the world realize its goal of eradicating polio once and for all. It also recognized the remarkable leadership provided by the Governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan and the commitment of their fellow Member States of the OIC in maintaining adequate support. Regarding the upcoming low poliovirus transmission season in Afghanistan and Pakistan, which will run from the last quarter of 2017 through the second quarter of 2018, it noted that this will provide the best opportunity to stop polio, and affirmed its willingness to provide support to all those engaged in this ultimate goal.

... and presents progress at Sixth Islamic Conference of Health Ministers

The chairman of IAG's Executive Committee, Dr Yagoub Al Mazrou, delivered a presentation on 7 December to the Sixth Session of the Islamic Conference of Health Ministers in Jeddah where he detailed IAG's progress since he last presented to the conference's fifth session two years ago in Istanbul.

A resolution issued at the end of the conference, which was organized by the OIC and the Ministry of Health of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, commended the role of the IAG and Member States and their efforts towards polio eradication; welcomed the decision to expand IAG's mandate to other maternal and child health issues including routine immunization; and called upon Member States and other donor entities to provide the necessary financial support that would allow the IAG to continue its work. The



From left: Dr Yousef bin Ahmad Al-Othaimeen, OIC Secretary General; Dr Tawfiq bin Fawzan Al-Rabiah, Saudi Minister of Health; and Amb. Muhammad Naeem Khan, OIC Assistant Secretary General for Science and Technology.

conference also issued a declaration that reiterated the need to promote

collaboration to combat communicable diseases including polio.

Executive Committee chairman meets with Turkish Minister of Health ...

An IAG delegation led by the chairman of IAG's Executive Committee met with H.E. Dr Ahmet Demircan, Health Minister of Turkey, on the sideline of the Sixth Session of the Islamic Conference of Health Ministers to discuss areas of common interest. Dr Al Mazrou praised Turkey for its support to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) and for its valuable contributions to Member States of the OIC and in particular to Somalia. He briefed him on the efforts made by the IAG and its work with local religious scholars to eradicate polio

and support other maternal and child health issues including routine immunization.

On his part Dr Demircan detailed Turkey's achievements in the health sector especially as related to vaccine and pharmaceutical production, and praised IAG's work in its different areas of specialization. He promised to provide support to the IAG including bringing it together with Turkish NGOs working on the ground in relevant priority countries.



H.E. Dr Ahmet Demircan, Health Minister of Turkey (left), presents gift to Dr Yagoub Al Mazrou, chairman of the Executive Committee of the IAG.

... and meets with other heads of delegations and donor agencies



Mr Ibrahim Abdullah Al-Khuzayem, ISF (left) with Dr Al Mazrou.

Also on the sideline of the conference the IAG delegation led by Dr Al Mazrou met with the representatives of a number of Member States including Somali Health Minister H.E. Dr Fawziya Abikar Nor; UAE Undersecretary for Health Centers, H.E. Dr Hussein Abdul Rehman Al Rand; and Kuwait Undersecretary for Technical Affairs, H.E. Dr Waleed Khalid Alfalah. They also met with the Executive Director of the Islamic

Solidarity Fund (ISF), H.E. Mr Ibrahim Abdullah Al-Khuzayem, and the Director General of the Statistical, Economic, and Social Research and Training Center for Islamic Countries (SESRTC), H.E. Ambassador Musa Kulaklikaya, in order to introduce the IAG and seek support and collaboration with these different Member States and organizations.

Brief introductions were also exchanged with the

Consultant for the Supervisor General for the King Salman Humanitarian Aid & Relief Centre, Dr Samer Aljetaily,

and the International President of Medicins Sans Frontieres (MSF), Dr Joanne Liu.



Dr Waleed Khalid Alfalah, Kuwait (center) with IAG delegation.



Dr Hussein Abdul Rehman Al Rand, UAE (left) with Dr Al Mazrou.

Polio update

20 wild polio cases of type 1 have been reported so far in 2017: 12 in Afghanistan and 8 in Pakistan

About the IAG

The Islamic Advisory Group (IAG) was launched in 2013 after consultations between Al Azhar Al Sharif, the International Islamic Fiqh Academy (IIFA), the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) who make up the core membership of the group along with other religious scholars, technical experts and academics. It aims to muster support from Muslim religious scholars and groups, donor countries, and organizations for the global effort to end polio in the high-risk areas of priority countries (Pakistan, Afghanistan and Somalia).