



Organisation of Islamic Cooperation



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Somali Children's Health: Polio and other Immunizations

Khartoum, Sudan

28-29 January, 2015

Statement of the Meeting

1. We, participants in the meeting of the “Somali Children's Health: Polio and other Immunizations”, organized by the Islamic Advisory Group for Polio Eradication (IAG) and hosted by the Federal Government of Sudan on 28-29 January 2015, acknowledge that this meeting's overarching goal of protecting our children's health and sparing them the devastating and debilitating effects of preventable diseases is the principal motive and predominant incentive that have drawn us together and inspired us to join hands and forces in this forum for the sake of our children, their future and welfare.
2. Child immunization is one of the most cost-effective public health interventions. Globally, immunization prevents between two and three million deaths of children every year. These diseases account for nearly 20 percent of deaths, which amounts to nearly 1.8 million children under five who die of vaccine-preventable diseases every year.
3. In our two-day extensive discussions and deliberations; which brought together Muslim scholars, officials, civil and community leaders, health experts, communicators and other influencers from different regions of Somalia as well as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Pakistan; we have reiterated the rational consensus that ensuring the life-saving immunization of Somali and all other children against polio and every

vaccine-preventable disease must supersede all other interests and concerns and should never be compromised or sacrificed during times of conflict and war or for any other extraneous and irrelevant causes and purposes whatsoever.

4. We strongly oppose and denounce all practices and actions, whether deliberate or unintentional, that result in denying helpless children their universally-acknowledged right to immunizations and vaccinations that protect them against dreadful diseases, incapacity and even death. Highly distinguished and competent Muslim scholars in this meeting and elsewhere have repeatedly emphasized that immunizations were a Muslim religious obligation binding parents and leaders everywhere and that failure to comply is categorically considered a serious violation of Islamic rules and teachings and of simple moral and humanitarian norms and standards.
5. We firmly believe in the essential and urgent need for Muslim scholars, community and community leaders, educators, and other influential opinion makers in all regions of Somalia to be fully and effectively engaged and involved in supporting, facilitating and safeguarding polio and other immunization programs and drives in their respective regions and localities and to proactively dispel myths and invalidate misconceptions about vaccines which are rightly blamed for the intolerable persistence of horrendous ailments and health disorders in Muslim countries and communities.
6. We similarly urge all stakeholders and relevant actors to work towards securing and enhancing the confidence of Somali communities and families in polio and other vaccination programs and in the national and local governments' leadership of these indispensable interventions, especially in priority areas and among individuals and community segments that continue to resist and refuse immunizations and thereby endangering the health of their offspring and undermining the welfare of their societies.
7. To that end, we have agreed on the necessity and imperative utility of immediately forming action groups in the different regions of Somali following the suit of similar structures such as Pakistan's National Islamic Advisory Group for Polio Eradication that will enlist and mobilize in their

ranks capable achievers and game changers, evaluate pertinent barriers, and devise result-oriented plans aimed at encouraging, stimulating and invigorating polio eradication programs, with a special focus on polio reservoirs, and other critical immunizations.

8. We acknowledge and fully support the recommendations, statements and Declarations issued in the past few years by the IAG in support of immunizations, including polio vaccinations, and all health workers and facilities involved.
9. The IAG and participants of the meeting express their high appreciation to the Federal Government of the Republic of Sudan and its sagacious leadership for its generosity and commendable hosting of the meeting.