

October 2009

Global Polio Eradication Initiative

Nigeria

Situation analysis

- Re-invigorated high-level political commitment: HE President Umaru Yar'Adua is personally engaged and has committed publicly "to do everything humanly possible to ensure that polio is finally and totally eradicated from Nigeria."
- In February 2009, the governors of the 36 states collectively signed the 'Abuja Commitments to Polio Eradication', publicly committing to provide the necessary leadership to eradicate polio.
- As a result of this new commitment, marked improvements in several previously high-risk northern states have been noted, including of note in Kano state. However, improvements are not consistent across all northern high-risk states.
- Nigeria is the only place in the world where all three serotypes are circulating: wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1), wild poliovirus type 3 (WPV3), and a type 2 circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus (cVDPV2).
- However, operational improvements in 2009 means that transmission of all three of these serotypes is declining. In particular, progress has been achieved at curbing WPV1: in the traditional high-risk northern states of Kano, Kaduna, Katsina and Jigawa, no WPV1 has been reported for six months, testimony to improvements in the delivery of immunization.

KEY FACTS

- ✓ New high-level political commitment at national and state levels
- ✓ State governors sign 'Abuja Commitments'
- ✓ High-level commitment now being translated into field-level improvements
- ✓ Low levels of type 1 - but circulation of three serotypes

Key challenges

- Operational challenges continue mar the quality of vaccination campaigns in some areas, as improvements are not consistent across all Local Government Areas (LGAs)
- Engagement of political leadership at the Local Government Area (LGA – district) and some state level is inconsistent across northern states.
- Community engagement must be strengthened in some areas.

Solutions

- To capitalize on the decline of poliovirus in the country, new strategies are being implemented as of September 2009.
- The new bivalent OPV will be introduced in the country, possibly as early as November.
- To supplement ongoing, large/scale Immunization Plus Days (IPDs), mop-up immunization campaigns with type-specific monovalent OPVs will be implemented in response to newly detected polio cases.
- Mechanisms have been put in place to monitor implementation of the 'Abuja Commitments', including tracking of number of LGA Chairpersons engaged in polio eradication activities in each state.
- UNICEF is leading a strengthening of the technical assistance for communications in the highest-risk states, to enhance community awareness and engagement.