

PRESS RELEASE

Federal Ministry of Health
30 March 2005

POLIO CAMPAIGN TARGETS 14.7 MILLION ETHIOPIAN CHILDREN

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia- A house-to-house polio eradication campaign targeting 14.7 million children under five years to be vaccinated against polio is planned for in 1-5 April and 23-27 May, 2005.

The campaign is to be conducted as an urgent response to avert further Wild Polio Virus importation and to contain its spread within the country. During the campaign, 100,000 volunteers and health workers will administer oral polio vaccine to children by going door-to-door.

The first round of the House-to-House National Immunization Days (NIDs) will be conducted from April 1-5, 2005 and the second round from May 23-27 2004. To ensure the success of the campaign, 26 National and 6 International Facilitators have been deployed to all regions where they are working with local health authorities to plan, train and supervise the vaccination teams and monitor the quality of the campaign. 2.5 million copies/sheets of nine types of Guides and Forms prepared and printed with Rotary International's support have been dispatched to the regions for use during the Campaign. Radio and TV spots will be transmitted on a national network in different nationality languages to inform the general public about the date, strategy and benefits of the campaign. The 21 million doses of Oral Polio Vaccine which have been procured by UNICEF are being dispatched to the regional cold chain stores.

To fill the immediate USD 4.9 million funding gap for April and May 2005 National Immunization Days, resource mobilization is being carried out jointly by WHO and UNICEF to ensure that the campaigns are conducted. USAID, JICA and Rotary International have positively responded to the resource mobilization efforts. Others are assessing the situation to see how they can support.

The Federal Ministry of Health hereby appeals to all parents and care-takers to ensure that all children under 5 years of age are presented for immunization and to national and international donor agencies for further support to address the funding gap and be able to interrupt the transmission of polio virus in Ethiopia.

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