

**The Fourth Islamic Conference of Health Ministers
Jakarta, Republic of Indonesia, 22 – 24 October 2013**

Concept Paper

Fifth Working Session: Panel Discussion III on Global Eradication of Polio

The last remaining three polio endemic countries – Nigeria, Pakistan and Afghanistan – are all OIC Member States. In 2012, 100% of children paralysed (223) by polio were from the OIC Member States. Insecurity and misconceptions about polio vaccinations have had a serious impact on programme implementation. In 2013 polio has also spread to Somalia, and currently 60% of all polio cases in the world have been reported in that country. The risk of additional cases in Somalia remains very high as vast numbers of children have not been vaccinated for last 3 years.

Muslim communities have high level of trust in the Islamic religious and community leaders. These leaders play a strong role and their engagement at global, national and sub-national levels has been critical for the success of polio eradication. They could further assist in increasing community support for vaccinations, and also help secure access to children in areas of insecurity.

The OIC has been a strong and vital partner of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) in three key areas. The OIC's leadership has resulted in political commitment for polio eradication in all OIC member states and greater cooperation between the OIC and WHO and UN. Resolutions in support of polio eradication were adopted in Islamic Summits, in Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, and the Islamic Conference of Health Ministers consistently since 2003. The OIC's leadership has also been instrumental in securing comprehensive Fatwa's in support of polio vaccinations from the International Islamic Fiqh Academy, in sustaining support from Islamic religious scholars, and in the development of a new Islamic Advisory Group on polio eradication. The OIC's advocacy has also been essential to secure significant financing from various OIC member states and the Islamic Development Bank.

The Panel Discussion provides opportunity to review the existing strong support by the OIC Member States, Islamic religious and community leaders in addressing challenges facing polio eradication efforts in the last remaining OIC member states, especially the lack of access to children in the last polio-affected countries and to promote greater understanding among communities on the need for vaccinations. The Panel Discussion will also further elaborate its support to the global polio eradication initiative and identify areas where additional support is needed to ensure success and that no child in the OIC Member States suffers from polio paralysis in the near future.

Date: 23 October, 2013	Time: 10:30 hours	Room:
Moderator: Ministry of Health, Afghanistan		
Rapporteur: WHO/GPEI		
Session Programme and Speakers::		
No.	Name	Organization
1.		WHO/GPEI
2.	Dr Abdulqahir Mohamad Qamar, Director Fatwa and Sharia Rulings	International Islamic Fiqh Academy
3.	Mr Jay Wenger, Director, Polio Program Team	Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
4.		Islamic Development Bank
5.	Dr David Hipgrave, Senior Health Advisor	UNICEF

Key Questions to be addressed by Panel Members

1. WHO/GPEI

- To provide a global update on polio eradication with particular emphasis on the situation and challenges in polio-affected member states;
- To highlight areas where support and assistance from the OIC and Islamic leaders will be critical for global success of the programme;
- To provide summary of the new 2013-2018 Polio Eradication Strategic Plan and its impact on all OIC Member States.

2. International Islamic Fiqh Academy

- To highlight the support of Islamic religious leaders and scholars for polio eradication, and highlight key elements on the Fatwa's issue by the International Islamic Fiqh Academy that calls parents, Imams, other community leaders, and parties in conflict to ensure that all children are reached and vaccinated against polio and other childhood diseases;
- To highlight the role that religious leaders can play in OIC countries to build community support and secure access to children for health services, including polio vaccinations.

3. Islamic Development Bank

- To highlight the successful and innovative financing provided by the IDB for polio eradication in Pakistan;
- To highlight grant to be provided to Afghanistan for polio eradication;
- To highlight the innovative polio financing as a model for other health initiatives and work with other partners.

4. Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

- To highlight the role of BMGF in supporting global polio eradication and to address other vaccine preventable diseases;

- To highlight critical role that needs to be played by the private sector, including vaccine manufacturers in the new strategic plan;
- To highlight the role of philanthropists and new partners in providing financing support for the new 2013-2018 Polio Eradication Strategic Plan.

5. UNICEF

- To highlight the key challenges in raising community awareness and demand for polio vaccination in key OIC Member States;
- To provide examples of successful community mobilization and awareness raising initiatives in Islamic countries;
- To highlight areas where additional support from the OIC and Islamic religious leaders will be critical to enhance community support.

Outcomes:

- A public call for solidarity - *Islamic Solidarity for Polio Eradication* - calling on Islamic institutions, governments, scholars, religious leaders, communities and parents to work together:
 - To commit to protect all children from polio paralysis and life-long disability;
 - To highlight the safety of vaccinations and vaccines under Islamic law;
 - To ensure that every child is reached and immunized during every immunization campaign, and call for the removal of existing bans on vaccinations in some countries;
 - To ensure the full protection and safety of health workers in insecure areas and condemn killings of health workers;
 - To ensure the neutrality of health initiatives and call on all parties to urgently provide access to children in areas of conflict during vaccination efforts;