

COUNTRY PROFILE: ANGOLA

Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) Status: Non-endemic

Overview

- Angola has interrupted transmission of indigenous wild poliovirus and of imported virus which had re-established transmission, and as of 2009 currently responding to a separate importation of virus.

Context

- Conflict in Angola has contributed to a weak health system, low routine immunization coverage and insufficient capacity to fully implement international polio outbreak response guidelines.
- Security and political factors have led to the persistent circulation of imported wild poliovirus, whose transmission is highly concentrated in the Luanda-Benguela corridor along the Atlantic coast.

Challenges

- Refusals and distrust during vaccination campaigns continue to contribute to a significant number of missed children nationally and in Cabinda province.
- The quality of supplementary immunization activities needs to be improved in order to interrupt the remaining chains of transmission.
- Poor monitoring systems do not adequately explain the reasons for missed children and therefore limit the value of information needed to improve communications and vaccination efforts.
- Migrating populations between Angola and Democratic Republic of Congo comprise a high-risk population. Without social mapping of the migration patterns, the programme cannot target those most at risk of infection.

Key Actions Needed

- Scale up nationwide supplementary immunization activities to interrupt transmission and maintain population immunity in polio-free areas.
- Revise and update operational guidelines to ensure the quality of supplementary immunization activities.
- Re-visit all districts with coverage rates below 90 per cent during any supplementary immunization activity (as verified by independent monitoring).
- Enhance acute flaccid paralysis (AFP) surveillance to ensure the rapid detection and response to residual transmission.
- Develop resources through international technical assistance and communications, to levels which are comparable to those in polio-endemic countries.

To learn more about the roles and responsibilities of UNICEF and other GPEI partners, visit:
<http://www.polioinfo.org/index.php/about-us/partners>