

COUNTRY PROFILE: CHAD

Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) Status: Re-established transmission

Overview

- Circulation of an imported wild poliovirus has persisted for more than 12 months, and the re-established polioviruses have infected other, previously polio-free areas.
- As the re-established virus continues to circulate throughout the country, the priority is to improve the quality of nationwide immunization campaigns.

Context

- Conflict in Chad has contributed to a weak health system, low routine immunization coverage and insufficient capacity to fully implement international polio outbreak response guidelines. These factors have led to persistent circulation of imported wild poliovirus and to the re-infection of other areas and countries.

Challenges

- Low levels of campaign awareness and poor understanding of polio and the reasons for vaccination with oral polio vaccine (OPV) lead to high absenteeism of children during immunization rounds.
- The provision of immunization services by unqualified, untrained or distrusted individuals, and sometimes even children, heightens distrust and refusal of OPV. In addition, untrained vaccinators often miss houses during rounds.

Key Actions Needed

- Improve the quality of nationwide campaigns with a combination of monovalent OPV type 3 and trivalent oral polio vaccine or bivalent OPV, as appropriate to the emerging epidemiology, with a focus on enhancing the quality of supplementary immunization activities in the areas with the lowest coverage levels.
- Implement monovalent OPV type 3 mop-up campaigns to supplement the nationwide activities as the virus becomes geographically restricted.
- Increase acute flaccid paralysis surveillance to ensure the rapid detection and mop-up of any residual transmission.
- Enhance resources – particularly international technical assistance and communications – to levels which are comparable to those in endemic countries.
- Update outbreak-response microplans for each area and provide refresher training for all key staff.
- Seek high-level support for terminating outbreaks.

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