

### **Polio Continues to Remain a Public Health Emergency for next Three Months, WHO**



#### **Immunization of Children with Oral Polio Vaccine**

The Global Commission for the Certification of Poliomyelitis Eradication on world polio day (24<sup>th</sup> October) declared eradication of wild poliovirus type-3 as a significant milestone in the war against polio. The last wild type 3 virus case was reported in 2012 from northern Nigeria, and the wild type-2 poliovirus was eradicated in 2015. Its last case was reported in India in 1999. However, the type-1 wild poliovirus is still circulating in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and often gets transmitted across their borders. Cases of type-1 wild poliovirus transmission were also reported from Pakistan to Iran.

In 2014, polio was declared as public health emergency of international concern. The World Health Organisation (WHO) announced on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2020 that polio shall continue to be a public health emergency for next 3 months. A total of 156 polio cases *i.e.*, affected by wild poliovirus type-1, have been recorded in year 2019 which is much higher than cases reported in 2018 (28 cases). Most of the polio cases were reported from Pakistan and Afghanistan due to low vaccination rates.

Besides the wild type virus, number of vaccine derived poliovirus type 2 strains has emerged in several countries and has become a matter of concern for health professionals. In 2019 only,

about 249 vaccine-derived poliovirus cases were documented from countries like Pakistan, Angola, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The presence of wild polio virus strains in any part of world creates threats of its spreading to other parts. The way forward seen to prevent its spread is to switch from bivalent oral polio

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