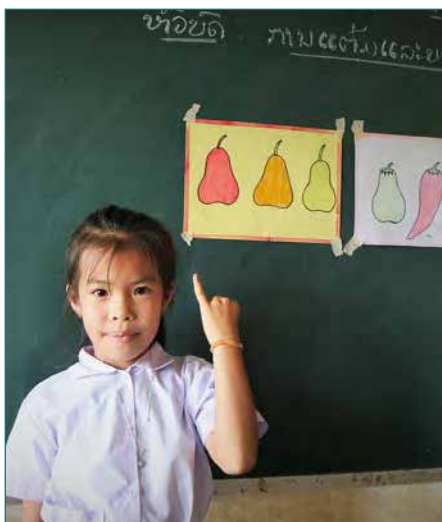


1. Implementation of the Polio Endgame in the Western Pacific Region



A young girl proudly participates in a supplementary immunization activity (SIA) rolled out across the Lao People's Democratic Republic in response to an outbreak of type 1 circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus. Monthly SIAs were conducted starting soon after detection of the virus in October 2015.

In the past year, the Western Pacific Region has made important strides in implementing the *Polio Eradication and Endgame Strategic Plan 2013–2018*, known as Polio Endgame. Member States have made major progress on three key objectives:

1. Detecting and interrupting poliovirus

The Western Pacific Region was first certified as free of polio in 2000. Since then, national certification committees and the

Regional Certification Commission have closely monitored the situation, and the Region has maintained its polio-free status.

Though no wild polioviruses have been detected in the Region since 2011, 11 confirmed cases of type 1 circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus (cVDPV1) were detected in the Lao People's Democratic Republic between September 2015 and January 2016. The outbreak response was rapid, beginning within 14 days of confirmation of the first case. Since then, eight rounds of polio vaccine supplementary immunization activities (SIAs) have been conducted from October 2015 to June 2016. In addition, preventive SIAs to increase population immunity were conducted in Cambodia, China and Viet Nam.

2. Strengthening immunization systems and withdrawal of oral polio vaccine

All countries and areas using any oral polio vaccine (OPV) in their national immunization schedule successfully switched from trivalent OPV (tOPV) to bivalent OPV (bOPV) during the globally synchronized switch from 17 April to 1 May 2016.

In addition, WHO recommended globally that all countries and areas using a polio vaccination schedule that included only OPV should add – before the switch – at least one dose of inactivated polio vaccine (IPV) in their national schedule.

In the Western Pacific Region, this meant such a change was needed in 17 countries and areas, and of these 15 successfully introduced IPV. The introduction of IPV in Mongolia and Viet Nam was delayed due to the global shortage of the vaccine. Meanwhile, Malaysia, Tokelau and Tuvalu have switched to a schedule that only uses IPV.

3. Virus containment and certification

All countries and areas successfully completed preparations for containment of wild poliovirus type 2 (WPV2) and vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 (VDPV2) and have submitted reports on their destruction or containment. Australia, China, Hong Kong SAR (China) and Japan will each designate poliovirus-essential facilities to retain type 2 wild and/or vaccine-derived polioviruses.

All Member States submitted documentation concerning the date when WPV2 was last isolated. This information, along with similar documentation from other WHO regions, made it possible for the Global Certification Commission to declare the worldwide eradication of indigenous type 2 wild poliovirus. Through these efforts, the Western Pacific Region has made an essential contribution to the Polio Endgame. Although some challenges remain, we are close to eradicating the scourge of polio once and for all. ■