

**Statement of the Polio Oversight Board on Routine Immunization**

The world is closer than ever to polio eradication. While the poliovirus continues to infect and paralyze children, it is now circulating in fewer and fewer areas. Achieving and sustaining eradication requires high-quality implementation of all immunization strategies including the strengthening of Routine Immunization.

High routine immunization coverage establishes a strong base for population immunity to prevent polio outbreaks and builds a sustainable platform for the introduction of the Inactivated Polio Virus Vaccine and other lifesaving vaccines.

While Polio-funded personnel in areas with ongoing poliovirus circulation must continue to focus their efforts on improving the quality of SIAs and AFP surveillance, it is critical that efforts to increase routine immunization coverage be accelerated.

We call on all staff of the GPEI, at all levels of the initiative, from headquarters to communities, to sustain their remarkable efforts to eradicate polio and further enhance their support for strengthening routine immunization and monitoring progress in this critical component of the programme.

These efforts are particularly important in the ten focus countries<sup>1</sup> where GPEI has committed to contributing to the improvement of routine immunization coverage. We ask all GPEI staff to help monitor progress in these countries and provide biannual feedback to the Polio Oversight Board.

1. <sup>1</sup> The ten countries are: Afghanistan, Angola, Chad, DRC, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, South Sudan.