

Sub-National Polio Immunization Days Commences in Sierra Leone



The Minister administering first dose of the vaccine



The Deputy Chief Medical Officer chairing the event



Dr Mitula administering a dose of the vaccine



Community members at the launch of the campaign

The Sub-national polio immunizations days campaign commenced to administer Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV) to children 0-59 months in selected communities on 11 May 2012. The campaign will end on 14 May. It will focus mainly on *“hard to reach areas”* and areas *“poorly covered or missed”* in the previous polio national immunization days campaigns. The campaign was officially launched in Freetown by the Hon. Deputy Minister of Health and Sanitation, Mr. Tamba Borbor Sawyer. The event was attended by Ministry of Health officials, community stakeholders, the UN and other partners. In his launching statement the Deputy Minister emphasized the importance of vaccination to prevent polio. He also stressed the government’s commitment to the polio eradication efforts.

Statement of the UN Country Team delivered by Dr. Pamela Mitula, WHO/EPI Team Leader, reaffirmed the UN’s support to the government and people of Sierra Leone *“to realize the goal of polio eradication”*. It also emphasized the importance of ensuring that all children below the age of 5 years are immunized during the campaign *“including those in the hard to reach areas”*

Vaccinators will administer the OPV to more than half a million children aged 0-59 months using the house-to-house strategy. Information from the updated Micro planning exercise were used for the implementation. In addition, social mobilization to inform the communities of the campaign and supervision have been strengthened. Independent monitors have also been deployed in all districts to monitor the campaign and to identify poorly covered or missed areas for revisits. Seven other countries in the West African region are conducting a synchronized campaign to prevent further spread of the polio outbreak in the region.

Sierra Leone conducted the first round of polio NIDs 2012 in March. Data from the 1st round campaign showed that more than 10% of the targeted children were missed particularly in hard-to-reach communities. The current sub-National campaign is to ensure these communities are reached.



Drama to social mobilize against polio



Vaccinators in a hard to reach community