Situation Update

- The Somalia Polio Programme has not confirmed any new cases of circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 (cVDPV2) in children with acute flaccid paralysis (AFP) since 8 May 2019. A total of three cVDPV2 cases have been reported in Somalia across 2019;

- A cVDPV2 was recently detected (25 May 2019) during routine collection of healthy child samples from a child in Ufen district, of Bari region, Puntland, indicating evidence of ongoing circulation of the virus;

- The Somalia Polio Programme last detected and confirmed circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 3 (cVDPV3) in a child with AFP on 7 September 2018;

- Somalia has confirmed a total of 15 cases of children with cVDPV since onset of the ongoing type 2 and concurrent type 3 outbreaks (eight children with cVDPV type 2, six children with cVDPV type 3 and one with co-infection of cVDPV2 and cVDPV3).

Case Response

In response to the detection of the circulating type 2 virus in Somalia, a series of targeted campaigns using monovalent oral polio vaccine type 2 (mOPV2) are underway. The next campaign is planned for 19 - 22 August. Health workers are intending to reach 1.1 million children under the age of five living in Puntland and Somaliland with the life-saving vaccine. This campaign will be synchronized with parallel immunization activities carried out in Somalia region, Ethiopia.

Preparation for the Campaign

- In preparation for the upcoming campaign, an immunization activity review workshop was held Hargeisa and Garowe to discuss the results of the last vaccination round, and the way forward to ensure better campaign quality;

- A revaccination strategy has also been finalized, to help ensure that more children will receive vaccine doses;

- To help reduce the number of children missed by polio vaccination teams, UNICEF has planned a joint training for vaccinators and house-to-house mobilizers.
Surveillance for Acute Flaccid Paralysis

- A total of 218 children with acute flaccid paralysis (AFP) have been reported by Somalia’s surveillance network. Of these, 193 children have been found to not have polio, three have been confirmed as cVDPV2 cases, and 22 are still undergoing laboratory testing;

- AFP cases are distributed across different population groups in the country, including people with a nomadic, rural, or urban lifestyle, and internally displaced persons (IDPs);

- Analysis of immunity levels of children presenting with non-polio acute flaccid paralysis (NPAFP) shows that 91.3 % have received one or more doses of oral polio vaccine as a result of routine immunization services or recent campaigns;

- Of the 21 zero-dose AFP cases reported in 2019, 14 of these are children within the 6 – 59 month age group. This highlights that there are still some children with low protection against polio, underlining the need to ensure future campaigns reach every child and routine immunization services are invigorated.

Environmental Surveillance

- In total, in 2019, 32 specimens of sewage have been collected from four environmental sampling sites in Banadir and sent to the laboratory for testing. 21 are negative for the poliovirus, four have confirmed enterovirus; one is confirmed to hold ambiguous vaccine-
derived poliovirus (aVDPV); two have Sabin-Like virus (SL3); and four are pending with the lab.

An environmental surveillance officer puts on a protective mask before taking wastewater samples from the Waberi district collection site in Mogadishu. (WHO/Illyas Ahmed)

Map: Circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus response campaigns (April-August 2019)

Communications for Development to help improve campaign performance

- Several different communications activities are planned to increase awareness of the August campaign. Government officials will monitor the implementation of some of these activities, which include radio and TV broadcasts;
- Social media in English and Somali will be used to inform parents about the campaign;
• Non-polio eradication UNICEF staff will be deployed to improve campaign performance.

Picture of the Day: 13 year old Mohamed Ahmed Abdullahi, who contracted polio as a young child, plays with his siblings in front of their house in Jigjiga Yar neighborhood in Hargeisa city. (WHO/Ilyas Ahmed)

Relevant Links
Somalia Weekly Surveillance: available here
http://www.somaliapolio.org
Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) website
*Vaccine-derived polioviruses video
QnA: What is vaccine-derived poliovirus?

Questions & Feedback:
Email to kamilmo@who.int or sykese@who.int