



The countdown has begun in Angola

SPECIAL BULLETIN

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National Emergency Plan against Poliomyelitis gets encouraging results

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From 8-10 July, 2.1 million children under age five were vaccinated against polio in four high risk provinces, namely Cunene, Luanda, Kuando-Kubango and Uíge. In Uíge, the campaign only covered the municipalities of Maquela do Zombo, Damba, Milunga and Quimbele, bordering the DRC, where polio cases were reported. It wasn't just another Sub-NIDs but a decisive step to stop the wild polio virus transmission in Angola.

As a rapid response action to the polio outbreak which occurred in 2010, with 33 wild cases confirmed, the Ministry of Health, in close collaboration with Health partners (WHO, UNICEF, Rotary International, CDC / USAID, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation) announced a National Emergency Plan. The vaccination campaigns started early in February this year instead of the usual start date of April. Sub-NIDs for polio vaccination have been carried out in high risk areas and immunisation of children under five years old was reinforced.

Despite some constraints related to

the low routine vaccination coverage throughout the country, Angolan health authorities achieved encouraging results in the implementation of the national emergency plan aimed at stopping polio virus transmission. Such results increase the belief that the country can achieve the goal of polio eradication if it continues to be committed to improve the quality and organization of the vaccination campaigns.

To strengthen vaccination strategy in those selected areas, it was important to collect some evidences like the fact that since 2007, some areas such as Luanda have been identified as a focus of polio transmission, not only to other provinces in Angola, but also to neighbouring countries.

To reinforce this view, the findings of epidemiological surveys show that some of the provinces infected by the wild polio virus in 2010, had never been infected.

Before the implementation of the current plan, NIDs started in April and because routine immunization coverage is low, Angolan children continued being exposed to wild polio virus, those worse affected by other social determinants like poor sanitation and lack of safe water are those who are most susceptible to the increased risk of infection.

In total, by July 2011, three national immunization days and two local sub-NID's took place in February, March, April, May and July. In this same period, the province of Luanda held five vaccination campaigns against polio.

By taking these measures, national health authorities eliminated the six month interval that usually occurred between campaigns and thereby strengthened immunisation of children against the wild polio virus.

Another key element of this new strategy was the recruitment of local coordinators, vaccinators, mobilizers and supervisors who have started working in their local areas of residence to ensure a high quality of vaccination.

In the same way, technical support from the coalition partnership against polio also increased. The WHO has increased its international staff for immunization from 4 to 11, including experts of the Regional Office for Africa, international consultants and other seven members of the "Stop teams", who are a specialized group of volunteers to reinforce immunization activities, sponsored by CDC/Atlanta. Other partners of the international coalition for the eradication of polio, like UNICEF and Core Group also provided experts to strengthen the technical support to Angola in the areas of communication, monitoring and evaluation.



High advocacy and leadership

In January 2011, a delegation including the Executive Director of UNICEF, Anthony Lake, Deputy Regional Director of WHO in Africa, Dr Matdshiso Moeti and Director of the Global Health Program Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Dr. Tachi Yamada had a meeting with His Excellency the President of the Republic of Angola, Eng. José Eduardo dos Santos, in the context of the polio eradication initiative.

The partners of the Government welcomed the

progress achieved in Angola to stop polio virus transmission and requested the head of state to the provincial governors to be more committed in vaccination campaigns in order to enable Angola to interrupt the polio virus transmission by 2011. After this meeting, Angola strengthened its



strategy in delivering primary health care at municipal level and provincial governments increased their engagement in immunization activities.

High political and administrative commitment



The new strategy adopted to accelerate polio eradication included a greater accountability of provincial governors, municipal and local administrators in im-

munization activities, as well as the housing committees' coordinators at neighborhoods.

Vaccination programs are now conducted by local communities themselves who are accountable for their organization, with a support provided by the health authorities and partners at municipal level.

These guidelines were reinforced in March 2011 when the Vice-President of Angola, Fernando da Piedade Dias dos Santos, was in Saurimo, the capital of Lunda-Sul Province, to chair the launching of the first round of National Immunization Days (NIDs) against polio. This event, showed once again how the Angolan Government is highly committed to eradicate polio.

...and increased Government financing Are a guarantee to eradicate polio



In past years, polio campaigns were sponsored by

the Ministry of Health's partners, but the Government became the main sponsor now with about 89% of operational used funds.

The government contribution is allocated to the primary health care budget line at Municipal Administrations level in order to

ensure the success of polio vaccination campaigns.



Signs of progress in 2011



In the province of Luanda, the last wild polio case occurred on 15th November 2010, corresponding to 8 free polio months as of today;

The province of Benguela reported its last wild polio case on 12th November 2010;

In 2010, seven provinces and eleven municipalities had reported 33 polio cases in total, namely Luanda, Bengo, Bié, Huambo, Lunda Norte, Lunda Sul and Uige.

As of July 15th 2011, only the province of Kuando-Kubango in Angola reported four polio cases which occurred in Menongue municipality, the capital city.

The last polio case was detected in Menongue, on 17th March 2011.

Between 2010 and 2011, the rate of missed children in routine immunization at national level was 32 percent (Penta 3);

In Menongue, the routine immunization coverage increased from 40% to 65% between 2007 and 2011;

According to the results of independent monitoring survey, it is also observed a significant improvement in the quality of campaigns, and the average of missed children decreased from 10% to 7% countrywide;

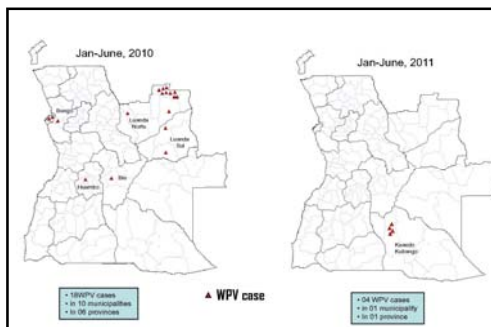
The supervision teams started field activities between 2 to 3 weeks before each phase of vaccination campaign.

Vaccinators and social mobilizers are updated with support materials and trained 10 days before the beginning of the NIDs and sub-NIDs.

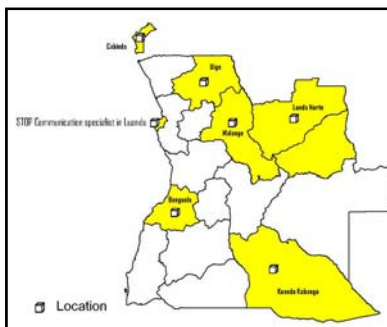
Ten thousand additional vaccine carriers were distributed on April and May 2011.

From January 2010 to June 2011

Polio cases have dropped in Angola



The images above indicate the polio infection settings in 2010 as well as the displacement of technical support teams to



the provinces of Cabinda, Uige, Malange, Lunda-Norte, Lunda-Sul, Benguela and Cuando-

Kubango, respectively. It also highlights a reduction of polio outbreak that dropped from 33 cases in seven provinces and eleven municipalities in 2010 to only four cases in Menongue municipality as of 15th July 2011.

Monitoring and Evaluation detected less missed children

Data collected by independent monitoring teams in 2010 indicate a sustained reduction of about 7% of missed children at the end of each immunization round, at national level.

For the first time, the province of Luanda reported a rate of 10% of missed children in each of the vaccina-

tion rounds held 2011, compared to more than 20% reported in the last year (2010).

Monitoring is an independent survey which aims to assess and to make corrections to the vaccination results. These activities are sponsored by the World Health Organization (WHO).



Photo stories on polio vaccination



From 8 to 10 July 2011, Angola made one more step to protect 2.136.379 children against the wild polio virus



The provinces of Cunene, Luanda, Kuando-Kubango and four municipalities in Uíge carried out three days of sub-nids against polio based on the epidemiological situation and on the results of the previous polio vaccination activities.



Polio campaigns are conducted by local communities now, with the technical support of MoH and polio partners

