From: Andrea Pfanzelter <‎████████████████████>
To: Jeff Epstein <Jeevacation@gmail.com>
Subject: Fwd: Polio Update Pakistan
Sent: Friday, November 8, 2013 2:58:32 AM

FYI
Latest report from Nasra on Pakistan
Andrea.

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████████████████████████████████

Begin forwarded message:

From: Nasra Hassan <██>
Date: 07. November 2013 20:32:07 GMT+5:30
To: Terje Rod-Larsen ███████████████████████████████████████ Andrea Pfanzelter
<████████████████████████████████>, Bettina Kemp
<████████████████████████████>
Subject: Polio Update Pakistan

Terje, IPI is undertaking daily monitoring & is in regular contact with interlocutors. Here is a brief update on the present situation, which shows some improvement over the past summer months – however, the droning to death of Pak Taliban's topmost leader on 1 Nov 2013 will bring consequences (including on the polio eradication programme PEP) on which I will send you a separate update in due course:

1. Increase in cases: both in the tribal belt as well as in adjacent settled areas, in some towns and slums – especially among tribal families displaced by conflict (thus missing out on vaccination) – but also a few cases sneaking into previously "clean" areas. Parental refusal rates, especially in remote scattered communities, have also increased over 2012.

2. Some success/softening in Taliban position: Despite those increases, and after strenuous efforts by IPI and others, and completely under the radar, there has been a "softening" in the Taliban position, i.e. they are not making pronouncements against polio vaccination and are often looking the other way, though they do refer to "spies" entering sensitive Taliban havens under the guise of anti-polio health workers (there is some truth to this, a charge also levied against NGOs, details later). There is confirmation of families carrying drops to banned areas but often without the required temperature storage.

NB: Although Balochistan Province health authorities announced on World Polio Day that there have so far been no recorded cases – 4 in 2012 vs. 73 in 2011 -- a bit of scepticism over the steep drop is in orde139

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<p style="margin:0cm 0cm 0pt" class="MsoNormal">3. Attacks

on health teams: have also decreased (to repeat, not all were aimed at the anti-polio programme but had other reasons, such as targeting of the police, security or pro-govt militia personnel accompanying the health workers, especially the last-mentioned).</p>

<p style="margin:0cm 0cm 0pt" class="MsoNormal"> </p>

<p style="margin:0cm 0cm 0pt" class="MsoNormal">4. Pak

Army role: In addition, the
Pakistan Army has been helping PEP but keeping this strictly under
wraps, with no info appearing in the press, so as not to give the Pakistan
Taliban any reason to undertake media-tique retaliatory action. </p>

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<p style="margin:0cm 0cm 0pt" class="MsoNormal">5. Taliban
ban: The FATA Health Secretariat (covering the tribal areas) is encouraging
a <i>jirga</i> (group of tribal elders and other influentials) in North
Waziristan to get the "good" Taliban to rescind their ban. </p>

<p style="margin:0cm 0cm 0pt" class="MsoNormal"> </p>

<p style="margin:0cm 0cm 0pt" class="MsoNormal">6. Support
by senior politicians: including
the Prime Minister, have made official statements underlining the importance of
PEP, especially in connection with World Polio Day – these are valuable in
keeping the official health structures focussed on polio, but have little
effect on the Pak Taliban. </p>

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<p style="margin:0cm 0cm 0pt" class="MsoNormal">7. Govt
talks with Taliban: despite media reports to the contrary, and despite what
the Prime Minister has stated, these talks have not yet begun, although there
are a number of parallel processes underway – now a complete (temporary) stop
follows the assassination of the Taliban leader. </p>

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<p style="margin:0cm 0cm 0pt" class="MsoNormal">8. Continuing
problems:</p>

<p style="margin:0cm 0cm 0pt 54pt" class="MsoNormal">(i)<span style="line-height:normal;font-
family:"Times New Roman";font-style:normal;font-variant:normal;font-weight:normal;font-size-
adjust:none;font-
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p;
<u>Corruption</u>:

eg. in Sind province, a health team refused
to administer drops until their 3-month backlog of salaries was paid. "Ghost"
kids, teams (latter also called "dummy teams"), vehicles continue. Similar in
education services, eg. "ghost schools", also called "shadow schoools" exist
but are better known and documented because these are permanent structures.
</p>

<p style="margin:0cm 0cm 0pt 54pt" class="MsoNormal">(ii)<span style="line-height:normal;font-
family:"Times New Roman";font-style:normal;font-variant:normal;font-weight:normal;font-size-
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p;
<u>Mis-reporting/under-reporting</u><span lang="EN-
GB">: figures of children covered continue to be too positive &
self-serving; different health structures give differing figures. </p>

<p style="margin:0cm 0cm 0pt 54pt" class="MsoNormal">(iii)<span style="line-height:normal;font-
family:"Times New Roman";font-style:normal;font-variant:normal;font-weight:normal;font-size-
adjust:none;font-
stretch:normal">
<u>Expired/poor quality vaccines</u><span lang="EN-
GB">: these rumours refuse to go away, and disgruntled health staff have
leaked this info.</p>

<p style="margin:0cm 0cm 0pt 54pt" class="MsoNormal">(iv)<span style="line-height:normal;font-
family:"Times New Roman";font-style:normal;font-variant:normal;font-weight:normal;font-size-
adjust:none;font-
stretch:normal">
<u>Inaccessibility</u>:
although this is a really major problem, it is invariably under-played and
contributes a great deal to children being missed.</p><font color="#000000"
face="Times New Roman">

<p style="margin:0cm 0cm 0pt 54pt" class="MsoNormal">(v)<span style="line-height:normal;font-
family:"Times New Roman";font-style:normal;font-variant:normal;font-weight:normal;font-size-
adjust:none;font-
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p;
<u>Routine immunization</u>: still
suffers from lack of attention & resources (which continue
to be focused on polio). </p>

<p style="margin:0cm 0cm 0pt 54pt" class="MsoNormal">(vi)<span style="line-height:normal;font-
family:"Times New Roman";font-style:normal;font-variant:normal;font-weight:normal;font-size-
adjust:none;font-
stretch:normal">
<u>Parental refusal</u>:
now cropping up in locations outside the Taliban area of influence as well;
many of these refusals are in remote areas where the public info campaign does
not reach (no electricity, so no TV/radio etc.). </p><font color="#000000"

face="Times New Roman">

<p style="margin:0cm 0cm 0pt 54pt" class="MsoNormal">(vii)   <u>Transit points</u>: to cover kids in vehicles, sounds simple and should work but small problems eg. lack of intra-departmental lack of coordination & cooperation get in the way.</p>

<p style="margin:0cm 0cm 0pt 54pt" class="MsoNormal">(viii)   <u>Mobility & volatility</u>: Because of a great deal of intra-Pak and cross-border mobility by affected groups such as Afghan refugees, internally-displaced families, and migrant labour, vaccination coverage can be volatile and change quickly from one season to the next. </p>

<p style="margin:0cm 0cm 0pt 54pt" class="MsoNormal">(ix)   <u>Flaws in PEP</u>: criticism is beginning to be voiced publicly by health staff in provinces/areas other than the Taliban-controlled areas, i.e. in Punjab and elsewhere – this can have a positive outcome in that "militant violence" and "security" cannot be used as sole excuses!   </p>

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<p style="margin:0cm 0cm 0pt" class="MsoNormal"> 9. Measures: Examples of additional concrete measures, in addition to those outlined in the May 2013 internal mission Report: </p>

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<p style="margin:0cm 0cm 0pt 54pt" class="MsoNormal">(i)

<u>Community involvement/responsibility:</u> </p>

<p style="margin:0cm 0cm 0pt 54pt" class="MsoNormal">(ii)   <u>Passport & ID issuance/renewal</u>: make polio vaccination of children a required document.</p>

<p style="margin:0cm 0cm 0pt 54pt" class="MsoNormal">(iii)   <u>Ditto visas</u>: should not be difficult to get Western & other countries, esp. the Gulf, to introduce, especially for Hajj & Umra.</p>

<p style="margin:0cm 0cm 0pt" class="MsoNormal"><i>NB</i>: In some cases eg. tribal areas, this will not work as, but should be feasible in other areas. </p>

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<p style="margin:0cm 0cm 0pt" class="MsoNormal">10. Syria/Pakistan angle: Syria has been free of the polio virus since 1999, but in recent months cases have been reported in north-east Syria with WHO stating that there is laboratory proof that viruses isolated in Palestine & Egypt originated from Pakistan. While a genetic analysis of the Syrian polio virus is not yet complete and while it is probable, it cannot yet be stated with certainty that the transmission came from Pakistan. If this turns out indeed to be the case, as is likely, it will be (as in sw China) another case of polio transmission & re-transmission caught up in the morass of jihadist militancy & movements.   </p>

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<p style="margin:0cm 0cm 0pt" class="MsoNormal">11. Afghanistan & border areas: With elections & troop withdrawals both scheduled for 2014 and increasing Afghan Taliban militant activity, it is likely that the national polio eradication programme will suffer. Eg. abduction of polio workers has been reported this

year. So far the official support by
Mullah Omar for polio vaccination (with the condition that it be coordinated
with them in areas under their influence and a "safe passage" letter obtained
and that no "foreigners" be involved) has been instrumental in good anti-polio
coverage -- although Afghanistan, too,
suffers from many of the problems found in Pakistan (corruption,
mis/under-reporting etc). However, as
of 2014, various parallel events & developments are likely to have a
negative effect on PEP:</p>

<p style="margin:0cm 0cm 0pt" class="MsoNormal"> </p>

<p style="margin:0cm 0cm 0pt" class="MsoNormal">(a) the attention of the Karzai regime is
already focused more on its own continued survival;</p><font color="#000000"
face="Times New Roman">

<p style="margin:0cm 0cm 0pt" class="MsoNormal">(b) attention & resources diverted to
political, financial and security issues considered more essential at this
stage than PEP;</p>

<p style="margin:0cm 0cm 0pt"><font color="#000000" face="Times New
Roman">(c) power struggles not only between the
Afghan Taliban and other armed groups, but also among the latter.</p>

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<p style="margin:0cm 0cm 0pt" class="MsoNormal">12. Next steps: IPI visit being planned
for 25 November 2013, and further to the May "next steps", <i>inter alia</i> : (i) to follow-up
on issues outlined
in May internal mission report as well as in this interim Update; (ii) analyse
impact of events & developments between May and now; (iii) review and
examine outcomes of first visit visit & contacts established; (iv) get update
on security issues which affect PEP; (v) set up additional, new parallel
"channels"; and (vi) initiate preliminary research on
Afghanistan.
</p>

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New Roman">End.
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