

President Karzai leads the introduction of Hib vaccine in Afghanistan

11 January 2009

<http://www.emro.who.int/afghanistan/news.htm>



Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai led the official ceremony of Hib vaccine introduction on 11 January 2009 in the country's Presidential Palace. The event successfully conducted in the presence of WHO's Eastern Mediterranean Regional Director Dr Hussein A. Gezairy, and Health Minister Dr. S.M. Amin Fatimie, UN Special Representative to the Secretary General Kai Aide, Diplomatic Representatives, WHO and UNICEF representatives, MOPH high authorities. The Hib vaccine (pentavalent) has been introduced in 1210 health facilities throughout the country.

In their speeches, Dr Hussein A. Gezairy, Dr. S.M. Amin Fatimie and Kai Aide indicated that GAVI support for the introduction of this expensive new vaccine represents a golden opportunity for preventing around 100000 cases of Hib-related diseases and saving around 15000 -20000 children lives in Afghanistan.

In a press conference, Minister of Public Health of Afghanistan emphasized the importance of Hib vaccine and high burden of Hib-related diseases in the country and pointed out that the introduction of these vaccines (Pentavalent) is expected to significantly contribute to reducing child mortality and achieving the target of MDG4.

Considering the high operational cost implication of catch-up campaign and cost of the vaccine, the National EPI Task Force Committee after consultations has recommended immunization of all the new borne children with the 1st dose of Hib vaccine and start giving Hib vaccine to those children who have received the series of 1st or 2nd doses of tetravalent with 3rd Pentavalent vaccine after the date of introduction.

Afghanistan has received 10 new walk-in cold rooms in October 2008. All the cold rooms were installed by national cold chain officers/technicians at national (3) and seven at regional cold stores and all are functioning for accommodation of all routine vaccines including one million doses of pentavalent arrived in November 08 and dispatched with the supplies to the regions, provinces, districts and all the health facilities throughout the country.