



Meeting of the Regional Certification Commission for the Polio Endgame in Washington, DC

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Location	Washington DC, USA
Dates	26-28 July 2016
Participants	Participants at this meeting included members from the Regional Certification Commission (RCC) and staff from the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO), and PAHO's Comprehensive Family Immunization Unit (FGL/IM). The objectives of the meeting were to:
Purpose	1. Review the final country reports on the supervision of the switch from the trivalent oral polio vaccine (tOPV) to the bivalent oral polio vaccine (bOPV); and 2. Review the advances of the country reports for the containment of wild poliovirus (WPV), vaccine-derived polio virus (VDPV) and the Sabin type 2 virus.

Summary of the revision of the country switch reports

36 countries in the Americas participated in the globally-synchronized switch from tOPV to bOPV in April 2016. All of the countries did an independent monitoring of the switch in the two-week period following their national switch date and continued supervision of the switch in 100% of the warehouses and vaccination service points in the three months following the switch.

For the revision of the final switch reports, the RCC considered the following essential information:

- Signature of the country
- Validation of the report by the national certification commission (NCC) with signature
- 100% of warehouses supervised
- 100% of the vaccination services supervised
- Verification that all leftover tOPV was destroyed

The RCC concluded that 29 reports contained the essential information and requested additional information from five of these countries (Bahamas, Bolivia, Montserrat, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago). The rest of the country reports were not complete and will be revised again at the next RCC meeting.

Summary of the WPV/VDPV/Sabin2 Reports

The 23 expected reports on the containment of WPV, VDPV and Sabin 2, corresponding to 22 countries and one sub-regional report for the Caribbean include 13 countries, 6 UK territories and 3 associate member states.



Participants of the 5th Meeting of the Regional Certification Commission (RCC) for the Polio Endgame held in Washington DC, USA, 26-28 July 2016.



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Reports were shared with the RCC members prior to the meeting. The analysis of the reports included the verification of the content and the clarity of the information requested in the model report template.

As of July 2016, the RCC had received 22 of 23 reports (21 country reports and the sub-regional Caribbean report). Uruguay is the only country that had not presented the RCC a report on poliovirus containment.

Six countries have declared to have WPV/VDPV infectious material; nine countries have reported infectious Sabin 2 material; seven countries have reported potentially infectious WPV/VDPV materials and 13 countries reported potentially infectious Sabin 2 material.

Brazil, Canada, Cuba, Mexico and USA have notified interest in designating Poliovirus Essential Facilities (PEF).

PAHO will continue working with the countries in the Americas to finalize the inventory of facilities with infectious and potentially infectious WPV, VDPV and Sabin 2 material, related to Phase I of GAPIII, as well as consolidating the Phase II containment of these materials and the certification of the poliovirus essential facilities, as defined by the GAPIII.



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Workshop on the Surveillance of Diseases being Eliminated and Eradicated

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Location	Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
Dates	18-26 August 2016
Participants	Those responsible for epidemiological surveillance in municipal hospitals, epidemiologists in the provincial directorates (sub-national level) and the team from the National Immunization Program
Purpose	Strengthen the technical capacity of those responsible for epidemiology at the local and subnational level on the epidemiological surveillance of febrile rash illnesses (measles-rubella) and acute flaccid paralysis (poliomyelitis)

In the framework of the country's national plan to sustain measles, rubella and congenital rubella syndrome elimination, and also considering recommendations from the International Expert Committee for the verification of the elimination of these diseases, it is a priority for the country to conduct activities that are oriented towards strengthening the epidemiological surveillance of vaccine-preventable diseases.

To this end, the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI), with support from PAHO/WHO, organized nine regional workshops focused on strengthening the technical capacity of epidemiologists at the local and subnational levels, emphasizing the surveillance processes (detection, reporting, research, control activities) in addition to information quality.

Two-hundred and seventy participants attended these nine regional workshops. Out of this total, 14.8% (40/270) were epidemiologists from the subnational level and 85.2% (230/270) were epidemiologists from hospitals at the local level.

The methodology established for these workshops included an evaluation of the participants, with the objective of determining their knowledge on the surveillance procedures of these diseases; a description of the execution of the surveillance processes according to the management level and the identification of factors that influence the accomplishment of these indicators.

Through interactive conferences and analyzing the reporting charts from different provinces, the participants identified aspects like case definitions, reporting opportunities, sampling, household research, development of control actions and data quality, as well as remembering the history of each of the diseases emphasized in the workshop.



*Participants at the regional workshop in Barahona. August 2016
Credit: Yenny Neira - PAHO/WHO*



*Participants at the regional workshop in San Cristobal. August 2016.
Credit: Yenny Neira - PAHO/WHO*



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During these workshops, the epidemiologists received a mini flipchart or “pocket flipchart” that will facilitate consulting on basic definitions and procedures, as well as facilitate the transference of knowledge to colleagues from other institutions.

Some of the most important results from this workshop were identifying the current challenges related to knowledge and the performance of epidemiological services at the local level, as well as possible improvement strategies that will allow for the establishing of an operational plan, the execution of which may positively influence results from the country’s indicators.