

USE OF BI-VALENT ORAL POLIO VACCINE SUPPLIED FOR POLIO SUPPLEMENTARY IMMUNIZATION ACTIVITIES IN ROUTINE IMMUNIZATION ACTIVITIES

Position statement

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic – certain countries are facing stock-outs of bi-valent oral polio vaccine (bOPV) for their essential immunization services. In this context, some of these countries have decided to use the vaccine stocks which had been procured for the purpose of Supplementary Immunization Activities (SIAs). The purchase of these stocks had been financed by the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) while vaccines used in essential immunization services are usually financed by the countries themselves.

The GPEI supports the necessity of continued essential immunization service. Therefore, countries that face stock outs of bOPV may tap into the vaccine stocks supplied for SIAs to sustain routine immunization. It is however imperative that the matter is carefully managed to ensure that the resources are in place to conduct the preventive SIAs as soon as the situation allows.

To ensure this, the following points should be addressed:

1. Accounting for bOPV stocks funded by the GPEI: Maintain a careful record of the doses supplied for SIAs with support from GPEI and reallocated to meet the needs of the routine immunization programme.
2. Restoring bOPV stocks: the country must replace the borrowed doses as soon as possible ahead of resumption of planned preventive SIAs
3. Provide monthly updates on the above to the SIA Options Task Team for consolidation, tracking and action.

The GPEI would like to emphasise that it is committed to maintaining and supporting routine immunization especially in the current COVID-19 pandemic and looks forward to finding an optimal solution for both programmes.

