

**PRESIDENT'S SECRETARIAT (PUBLIC)**  
**PRESS WING**

\*\*\*\*\*

**(PR No. 144/2019)**

**President Chairs a Briefing on Polio Eradication**

**Islamabad, September 24, 2019:** All-out efforts must be made to eradicate the fatal malady of Polio from the country and to make Pakistan a Polio Free Country, said President Dr. Arif Alvi during a presentation by Prime Minister's Focal Person on Polio Eradication (PMFP), Babar bin Atta, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad today. The meeting was attended by all the health partners including UNICEF, WHO, Rotary Club and Melinda Gates Foundation. Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Health, Dr. Zafar Mirza, and provincial chief secretaries were also present on the occasion.

The President said that Pakistan was facing myriad challenges in Polio Eradication, which was a question not only of national pride but also national security, and there was no room for complacency, he added. Therefore, he highlighted, we must work collectively to overcome community resistance, build awareness and risk perception of the virus, and to build stronger healthcare systems across Pakistan to eradicate Polio from the country. He expressed his strong belief that Pakistan Polio Eradication Programme had developed exceptional national expertise, knowledge and systems to beat the virus and to inspire communities and parents to safeguard their children. He underscored that Polio Eradication was one of the Government's top priorities and it was taking all measures to eliminate polio from the country.

PMFP gave a detailed presentation on the current situation of Polio cases in the country and the measures being undertaken for complete eradication of this menace. He informed the meeting that keeping in view the significant rise in number of polio cases in the country, the Government, in collaboration with all provinces, has doubled its efforts to curb the spread of this fatal virus. He further briefed the meeting that all stakeholders were engaged, including Ulemas, to persuade people to willingly administer the Polio drop to the children and support the polio vaccination campaign, especially in KPK.

The President commended the efforts of the polio eradication team, including all the health partners, in eradicating this fatal disease and emphasized that the role of Council of Islamic Ideology and mosques must be incorporated in all their future endeavors to overcome large-scale community mistrust and educate the masses, particularly the potential reservoirs, which are giving birth to this fatal disease. He also conveyed his resolve to continue his support for tackling the remaining challenges to reach this goal.

The President underlined the need for effective use of social media as well as cable TV to make people aware about the consequences of this fatal disease. He also urged all the stakeholders to involve the political representatives of the respective areas, where the cases are mostly reported, to play their role in convincing people for administering polio drops to the children.

The President appreciated the Ehsas Polio partnership and hoped that it will augur well for the polio eradication campaign. The representatives of WHO, UNICEF, Rotary Club, and Melinda Gates Foundation appreciated the Government of Pakistan's efforts towards polio eradication and extended their full cooperation and support to Government of Pakistan in making Pakistan Polio-free.

\*\*\*\*\*