

10th RCC Meeting of the Regional Certification Commission for the Polio Endgame in the Region of the Americas

Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, 23-26 October 2018



The 10th meeting of the Regional Certification Commission (RCC) for the Polio Endgame in the Region of the Americas took place in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic from 23 – 26 October 2018, with the participation of all RCC members, either in person, or via teleconference.

RCC members in attendance:

- Dr. Jose Luis Díaz-Ortega, Epidemiologist
- Dr. Angela Gentile, Infectologist
- Dr. Arlene King, Public Health and Preventive Medicine specialist
- Dr. Mark Pallansch, Virologist
- Dr. José Félix Sánchez Largaespada, Pediatrician

Participation via teleconference for the revision of assigned reports:

- Dr. Rosa Alba Salas, Virologist,
- Dr. Eliseu Waldman, Epidemiologist

The objectives of this meeting were to:

1. Session 1: Review the updated poliovirus containment reports; *(see page 2)*
2. Session 2: Review the first submission of national annual reports on the documentation of polio eradication status; *(see page 3)*
3. Session 3: Review the updated risk assessment *(see page 6)*
4. Session 4: Meet with representatives from the Ministries of Health and the National Certification Commissions from Haiti and the Dominican Republic to discuss the status of polio eradication. *(see page 8)*

SESSION 1: REVIEW UPDATED POLIOVIRUS CONTAINMENT REPORTS

Achievements/ progress

1. In the Region of the Americas, poliovirus containment work has continued, along with the updating of 23 poliovirus containment reports; which correspond to 22 country reports and one from the Caribbean Subregion (includes 13 countries, 6 United Kingdom territories and 3 associate members).
2. Between March 2016 and October 2018, the countries of the Region have presented an average of four updated reports (range 2 to 6). At this meeting, the RCC received 20 updated reports; the RCC did not receive an update from Canada, Ecuador and the Caribbean Subregion
3. Following the recommendation of the Global Commission for Certification (GCC) to complete WPV1 and WPV3 inventories, and World Health Assembly Resolution 71.16 on containment of polioviruses (May 2018), the RCC recognized the progress of the Region, since the GAPIII-Regional survey and inventory includes the identification of all WPV/Sabin serotypes and recommendation to move forward with the elimination of unnecessary WPV1 and WPV3 materials.
4. The summary of the RCC validation of containment reports are:

- Completeness of the Regional-GAPIII survey process

Status of the reports	# reports	Completeness of the Regional-GAPIII survey process (WPV/ Sabin serotypes 1, 2 and 3)
Complete	19	18 country reports + 1 Subregional report
Incomplete	4	Argentina, Brazil, México and United States
Total	23	35 countries + 6 territories + 3 associate members surveyed

- Inventory of infectious material (IM) and potentially infectious material (PIM) type 2

Status of the reports	WPV2/VDPV2		OPV2/Sabin2	
	IM	PIM	IM	PIM
Approved	18	18	16	10
Not approved	5 Argentina, Brazil, Canada, México, and USA	5 Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Mexico, and USA	7 Argentina, Brazil, Canada, El Salvador, Guatemala, México, and USA	13 Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru Uruguay, and USA
Total	23	23	23	23

- Inventory of infectious material (IM) and potentially infectious material (PIM) of WPV type 1 & 3

Status of the reports	IM and PIM of WPV1/VDPV1	IM and PIM of WPV3/VDPV3
Approved	16	16
Not approved	4 Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, and USA	4 Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, and USA
Not updated	3 Canada, Ecuador, and the Caribbean Subregion	3 Canada, Ecuador, and the Caribbean Subregion
Total	23	23

5. The number of countries with dPEF reduced from 7 to 5; and the number of dPEFs reduced from 32 to 20 (Brazil: 1, Canada: 5, Cuba: 1, Mexico: 1 and USA: 12).
6. The five countries with dPEFs have formally nominated a National Authority for Containment (NAC).
7. Three of the 12 dPEFs from USA have applied for the Certificate of Participation (CP) to NAC in accordance with the Containment Certification Scheme (CCS).

RCC recommendations on containment of poliovirus

1. Countries that have not finalized GAPIII-phase I activities (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Canada, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, United States, and Uruguay) should do so as soon as possible and submit an updated report to the NCC and RCC, in August 2019.
2. Countries should establish a data verification mechanism of monitoring, receiving, updating and consolidating survey results. This database should be available in case an external verification is required by the NCC/RCC/GCC in the near future. The database should include which facilities destroy, transfer or retain any type of material and the facilities that do not retain any IM or PIM material.
3. It is important that countries review all Containment Advisory Group (CAG) reports and implement the recommendations that are relevant to the country's containment situation.
4. Countries should finalize WPV1 and WPV3 inventories and advance with the destruction of unneeded WPV1/WPV3 materials.
5. Countries with dPEFs should start the first step of the Containment Certification Scheme (CCS) by submitting the documents for the Certificate of Participation (CP). Each candidate facility must formally engage in the CCS in order to retain poliovirus type 2 and submit to their NAC an application for participation, as soon as possible and no later than 31 December 2019.
6. Countries should implement the PIM Guidance and follow the recommended risk mitigation strategies. Each facility that retains PIM should sign a statement of responsibility and present a letter to NPCC with the rationale for keeping these materials

SESSION 2: REVIEW THE NATIONAL ANNUAL REPORTS ON THE DOCUMENTATION OF POLIO ERADICATION STATUS

This year was the first time in many years that countries in the Americas submitted a report on the documentation of the polio eradication status. PAHO/WHO shared a template with countries in March 2018, and most of the 22 countries and Caribbean Sub-Region sent in their reports by 31 August 2018 (with the exception of a few countries that submitted their report in September). The report covered six main sections: polio vaccination coverage, epidemiologic surveillance, poliovirus containment, risk assessment, risk mitigation, and outbreak response preparedness. The National Certification Commissions (NCCs) reviewed the report and validated the report by answering the following six questions and making specific recommendations to the country.

The 6 key questions to be answered by the National Certification Commissions

<i>Polio vaccination coverage</i>	Is the polio vaccination coverage high enough to prevent the circulation of wild poliovirus or of a cVDPV emergence?
<i>Epidemiologic Surveillance</i>	Is polio surveillance sensitive enough to detect an imported wild poliovirus or VDPV in a timely manner, if it were to occur?
<i>Containment</i>	Has the NCC reviewed and validated the last containment report submitted by the country?
<i>Risk Assessment</i>	Has the country conducted a risk assessment at the sub-national levels?
<i>Risk Mitigation</i>	Has the country developed a risk mitigation plan?
<i>Preparation of response plan for an event or outbreak</i>	Does the country have an adequate and updated response plan for an event or outbreak of polio?
<i>Validation</i>	The members of the NCC/RCC are firmly convinced that the country was polio-free during the report period

The Secretariat reviewed each report and developed a validation form for the RCC members. The RCC members reviewed the reports prior to the meeting, and at the meeting provided their assessment of the six questions, and specific comments and recommendations for each country. Individualized letters will be sent to each country and the Caribbean Sub Region with the RCC's observations and recommendations.

RCC Conclusions and Recommendations on Annual Report

- RCC commends the 22 countries and the Caribbean Subregion for the timely submission of the 2017 Annual Report and urges countries to continue to submit subsequent reports on a timely basis.
- RCC commends the 22 NCCs and the Caribbean Subregional Certification Commission (SCC) for their careful review and validation of the annual report and urges the NCCs and the SCC to continue working closely with the countries on the follow up and implementation of RCC recommendations.
- The RCC has concluded that there is no evidence of circulation of wild poliovirus or VDPV in the Region. However, the countries of the Region of the Americas are not complying with the certification standards. There are gaps and weaknesses that must be addressed and mitigated in order to ensure that the Region of the Americas remains polio-free and complies with the global certification requirements and standards.

- RCC is concerned about the lack of AFP cases classified as polio compatible and recommends that all countries give physicians who are not familiar with polio cases training on polio and how to classify AFP cases.
- RCC requests that PAHO provide countries with the expected standards to be achieved for each component of the annual report (coverage, surveillance, containment, risk assessment, risk mitigation, and outbreak preparedness) in order to enable standardization of the evaluation of the six key questions by NCCs and the RCC.
- RCC requests that PAHO update the template for the 2018 Annual Report submission and revise the wording of each of the validation questions.

COUNTRY	1. Is the polio vaccination coverage high enough to prevent the circulation of wild poliovirus or of a cVDPV emergence?		2. Is polio surveillance sensitive enough to detect an imported wild poliovirus or VDPV in a timely manner, if it were to occur?		3. Has the NCC reviewed and validated the last containment report submitted by the country?		4. Has the country made a risk assessment at the sub-national level?		5. Has the country defined a risk mitigation plan?		6. Does the country have an adequate and updated response plan for an event or outbreak of polio?		7. The members of the NCC are firmly convinced that the country was polio-free during the report period?	
	NCC	RCC	NCC	RCC	NCC	RCC	NCC	RCC	NCC	RCC	RCC	NCC	NCC	RCC
ARG	No	No	YES	No	Yes	*	No	No - Incomplete	No	No - Incomplete	No	Yes, but No POSE	Yes	Yes, but Medium Risk
BOL	YES	No	YES	No	Yes	*	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes, but High Risk
BRA	No	No	YES	No	Yes	*	Yes	No - Incomplete	Yes	No - Incomplete	Yes	Yes, but No POSE	Yes	Yes, but High Risk
CAN	YES	Yes	YES	Yes	Yes	*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
CAR	No	No	No	No	Yes	*	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No - only 6 complete	No	Yes, but 4 countries at Medium Risk
CHL	YES	Yes	YES	No	Yes	*	Yes	No - Incomplete	Yes	No - Incomplete	Yes	Yes, But No POSE	Yes	Yes
COL	YES	Yes	YES	Yes	Yes	*	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes, But No POSE	Yes	Yes
CRI	YES	Yes	YES	Yes	Yes	*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
CUB	YES	Yes	YES	Yes	Yes	*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
DOM	No	No	No	No	Yes	*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
ECU	No	No	YES	No	Yes	*	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	-	Yes, but Medium Risk
GTM	No	No	No	No	Yes	*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes, but High Risk
HND	No	No	No	No	Yes	*	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
HTI	No	No	No	No	Yes	*	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes, but No POSE	Yes	Yes, but High Risk
MEX	YES	No	YES	Yes	Yes	*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
NIC	YES	Yes	YES	Yes	Yes	*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
PAN	No	No	YES	Yes	Yes	*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	-	Yes, but Medium Risk
PER	No	No	No	No	Yes	*	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes, but Medium Risk
PRY	YES	No	YES	Yes	Yes	*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes, but Medium Risk
SLV	YES	No	YES	Yes	Yes	*	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
URY	YES	NA	No	NA	Yes	*	No	NA	Yes	NA	Yes	NA	Yes	NA
USA	YES	Yes	YES	Yes	Yes	*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes, but No POSE	Yes	Yes
VEN	No	No	No	No	Yes	*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes, but High Risk

* See RCC Recommendations on Containment Report

SESSION 3 Risk Assessment

Regional Risk Assessment

Until polio is eradicated everywhere, all countries remain at risk for polio importation. PAHO presented a regional risk assessment in July 2017 to the TAG, and the TAG endorsed this methodology and encouraged Member States to conduct annual national risk assessments to determine risk at the district level.

PAHO updated the assessment in 2018 and presented the results at both the 10th RCC meeting in October 2018 and the 6th Regional Polio Meeting in December 2018. The result of this assessment showed that five countries are at high risk, 12 countries are at medium risk, and 27 countries are at low risk.

PAHO will continue to update the risk analysis and work with the countries that are at highest risk to implement risk mitigation activities.

Regional Risk Assessment 2018 Results:



National Risk Assessment

As part of the polio eradication certification process it is necessary for all countries to carry out thorough risk analyses from the municipal level to the national level, so that countries may identify risks for the reintroduction of wild poliovirus or the emergence of vaccine-derived poliovirus in the Americas. To support countries with this task, PAHO has developed a national risk assessment tool. This tool was shared with all countries at the 6th Regional Polio Meeting in Guatemala in December 2018.

RCC Recommendations on Risk Assessment

- RCC approves the methodology and results of the Regional Risk Assessment tool and recognizes that this is a tool that will continue to evolve and change, as new data is available and as new global recommendations emerge.
- RCC recommends that PAHO continue to update the RA periodically and share the updated results with the RCC and with countries.
- RCC recommends countries complete sub-national risk assessments, using the format provided by PAHO. Countries may adapt this tool to include additional indicators that they feel are relevant risk factors in their country. The results of the RA should be included in the next annual report along with a color-coded map for high (red), medium (yellow) and low (green) risk areas.
- RCC recommends that countries use the results of the sub-national RA to develop their risk mitigation plan and report on the progress made in mitigating the risk in the next (2018) annual report. Risk mitigation plans should be specific and include the activities that will take place, the people responsible for carrying out the activities, and the timeline and budget that will be assigned to each activity.

SESSION 4 Meeting with representatives from the Ministry of Health and the National Certification Commissions from Haiti and the Dominican Republic

On 26 October 2018, the RCC convened separate meetings with representatives from the Ministries of Health and the National Certification Commissions from Haiti and the Dominican Republic. During each side meeting, the respective countries presented the progress and challenges faced for each of the six components of the Annual Report and discussed these issues with the RCC members. The RCC has developed specific recommendations for both countries and will be sending these recommendations to the NCC.