



*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

## **Opening Remarks**

to the

### **CONSULTATIVE MEETING ON VACCINE STOCK MANAGEMENT**

**Lahore, Pakistan, 9–10 January 2007**

Dear Colleagues

It is a pleasure to welcome you to this important Consultative Meeting on Vaccine Stock Management, organized in collaboration with the Network for Education and Support to Immunization (NESI), represented here by Dr Fred Van Der Veen. I would like to take the opportunity to thank NESI for its continuous support to the Expanded Programme on Immunization in our Region, and to extend my thanks to the Federal Ministry of Health and National Institute of Health of Pakistan for hosting this meeting.

Dear Colleagues

As you know, in the Eastern Mediterranean Region we place particular importance on vaccine management and logistics, as we strongly believe that they are the backbone of the vaccination programmes. Accordingly, one of our primary mandates is assisting Member States in making sure that safe and potent vaccines are provided to all eligible children and mothers. Without a sound vaccine management system, all the efforts of the vaccination programme would be wasted.

A good and effective vaccine management system should look at the handling of the vaccine from the point of production, through shipment and arrival to the country, storage at the central vaccine store, transportation, and storage at regional, provincial and district and service delivery stores. The system encompasses design of cold chain equipment and selection of correct and economical equipment, and requires a vision in which further expansion and developments are considered. Effective stock management and inventories, forecasting supply requirements, measures to reduce vaccine wastage rates, safety of health staff at work and injection safety are among the numerous issues to be addressed in the vaccine management system.

Dear Colleagues

We have organized and invited you to this meeting to discuss one of the common problems that almost all vaccination programmes face: vaccine stock management. The Regional Office assessed 18 out of 22 national vaccine stores in the Region during the past 4 years. The result of these assessments indicate that none of the 18 programmes has an effective, efficient and desirable vaccine stock management system. I also understand that the other regions are not in much better position with regard to vaccine stock management.

Some countries of the Region, such as Afghanistan, Pakistan and Sudan, have recognized the problem and have taken the initiative to develop their own vaccine stock management software. These countries are ahead of other countries in tackling the problem of vaccine stock management. For these reasons, we are focusing on the issue of vaccine stock management and we have developed a computer application that will be discussed during this meeting. Based on your discussions during the meeting, the software will be modified as necessary and finalized soon for use or further development by immunization programmes all over the world.

Dear colleagues

I am pleased to note that representatives of WHO headquarters and UNICEF and other organizations are present here to assist us. Their support will help enable us to implement the regional plan and to fulfil our commitment.

I wish you all a comfortable and pleasant stay here the historic city of Lahore and a safe journey back home.

Thank you.