



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

13 March 2013

Excellency,

I would like to thank you for leading your Government's emergency efforts in the fight against polio in Afghanistan. Your personal commitment to strengthen the management and accountability of the polio vaccination campaign in Afghanistan is bearing results, and I commend your Government for reporting a 54 per cent decline in polio cases in 2012 compared to the previous year.

Afghanistan has an opportunity to stop the spread of polio in the country and make an important contribution to global efforts to eradicate the disease if all children are vaccinated consistently during the current "low season" for poliovirus transmission.

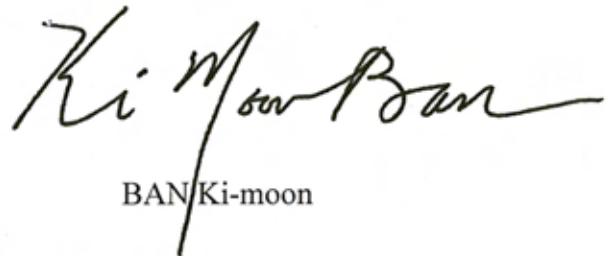
When the Executive Board of the World Health Organization met on 25 January 2013, it was noted that polio continues in Afghanistan only because many Afghan children still miss out on polio vaccination due to challenges associated with programme implementation and supervision, especially in 11 southern districts of Helmand and Khandahar provinces. The vast majority of these children live in areas that are accessible to vaccination teams. Concerns were also expressed about the possible cross-border spread of polio from Afghanistan to neighbouring countries.

To address these challenges, your Office may consider convening an Inter-Ministerial Task Force on polio with the participation of key Governors and administrative officials of polio-affected provinces and districts on a regular basis. The Task Force could be asked to review the implementation of polio vaccination activities and to take corrective actions as necessary. Your sustained oversight will be critical for ensuring greater accountability at all levels, securing the cooperation of religious and community leaders, and realizing the cooperation of all parties to facilitate access and guarantee security for vaccination teams attempting to reach children in areas experiencing insecurity.

His Excellency
Mr. Hâmid Karzai
President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
Kabul

I am confident that under your leadership and with the able support of the Minister of Health, your Government and the people of Afghanistan will be successful in stopping the transmission of polio in Afghanistan by the end of 2014 and securing a polio-free future for all children in the country. The United Nations remains committed to supporting the efforts of your Government to achieve these goals.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ki Moon Ban". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first and last names being more prominent than the middle name.

BAN/Ki-moon



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

13 March 2013

Excellency,

I would like to thank you for your Government's efforts in the fight against polio in Pakistan and commend your personal commitment to ensuring security for the polio field workers. Your Government's efforts have resulted in Pakistan reporting a 70 per cent decline in polio cases in 2012 compared to the previous year.

Pakistan has an opportunity to stop the spread of polio in the country and make an important contribution to global efforts to eradicate the disease if all children are vaccinated consistently during the current "low season" for poliovirus transmission.

I remain concerned about attacks on health workers in Pakistan, a matter that has also been raised by the Executive Board of the World Health Organization. In this regard, I encourage your Government to continue to take urgent action to bring the perpetrators of these crimes to justice, and to provide security for health and humanitarian workers in the country. I am particularly concerned about the situation in Peshawar and the surrounding polio-infected districts in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province where the intimidation of polio workers continues and has resulted in a deterioration in programme performance. This province would benefit from special attention to ensure that programme oversight and management is as robust as possible at this critical juncture in the national eradication programme. I am also concerned by the recent detection of the polio virus of Pakistani origin in Egypt. The proactive measures instituted by your Government to vaccinate travelling children in international airports and at border crossings are highly commendable.

Your continued leadership will be critical to ensure the success of the polio vaccination campaign. Most importantly, strengthened civil-military cooperation on polio eradication across the country – so as to ensure access to children – is necessary, particularly in insecure areas.

His Excellency
Mr. Asif Ali Zardari
President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan
Islamabad



You may also wish to consider the appointment of senior administrative officials at the federal and provincial levels who would be accountable for effective implementation of the polio vaccination campaign as well as ensuring continuity and sustained oversight of vaccination efforts during the upcoming election and transition periods. Enhancing societal support for vaccination efforts through the establishment of a national forum of dialogue that includes religious leaders, civil society, medical associations, community leaders, and media experts may also be considered.

I am confident that under your leadership, and with continued financial, technical and political support, the challenges facing the polio vaccination campaign can be addressed and overcome for the benefit of Pakistan and the world. The United Nations remains committed to support the efforts of the Government of Pakistan to achieve polio eradication.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ki Moon Ban". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ki" and last name "Ban" being more prominent than the middle name "Moon".

BAN/Ki-moon



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

13 March 2013

Excellency,

I was greatly saddened to learn of the recent attacks against polio vaccination workers and health centres in northern Nigeria. I take this opportunity to express my deepest condolences to your Government, as well as to the bereaved families of those who were killed. I would also like to commend your Government's quick response in launching an investigation into these incidents to bring the perpetrators to justice.

I remain concerned about the overall increase in polio cases in 2012 in northern Nigeria, as well as recent reports of the detection of the polio virus in Niger and the threat of the spread of polio to West Africa. In this connection, I would like to acknowledge your Government's efforts and your personal commitment to strengthening the implementation of vaccination campaigns in the affected areas. The launch of your Presidential Task Force on polio eradication, the establishment of Emergency Operations Centres, and the immunization of children at all border posts will greatly contribute to a reduction in the intensity of polio transmission.

Despite ongoing challenges, we have an opportunity to halt the spread of polio in Nigeria provided that children continue to be vaccinated. Much progress can be achieved through your Presidential Task Force's important work of closely reviewing the implementation of vaccination campaigns in the affected States. It will also be critical for the Task Force to build support at the State and community levels, including among traditional and religious leaders, for the vaccination campaigns.

His Excellency
Mr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, GCON
President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
Abuja

I am confident that under your able leadership, and with continued domestic funding and political support to the polio vaccination programmes, remaining challenges in the areas of insecurity in affected areas can be addressed. In the meantime, the United Nations remains committed to supporting the efforts of Nigeria in achieving total polio eradication.

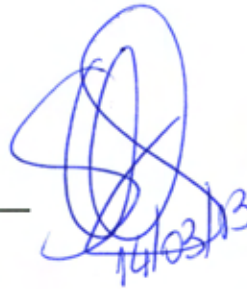
Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ban Ki-moon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ban" being more prominent and the last name "Ki-moon" written in a more compact, connected style.

BAN Ki-moon

Drafter: JS/RA
Proofread: LM/PV/NN/gw

Authorized: _____
13-01816



Annual Letters to the Presidents of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Nigeria in connection with ongoing polio eradication efforts in these countries

1. His Excellency
Mr. Hâmid Karzai
President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
Kabul
2. His Excellency
Mr. Asif Ali Zardari
President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan
Islamabad
3. His Excellency
Mr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, GCON
President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
Abuja