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### **Statement on agenda item 3.4—Polio Transition Planning**

*Delivered at the 142nd session of the World Health Organization Executive Board meetings.*

Chairperson and distinguished delegates, the Global Health Council, PATH, ACTION, RESULTS UK, and the American Academy of Pediatrics thank you for the opportunity to address polio transition planning.

The eventual loss of polio infrastructure, staff, and funding poses significant public health risks. Additionally, continued environmental surveillance and Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV) will be required after the world is certified polio free.

Thus, we are pleased to see progress exhibited in the Director General's polio transition planning report. We applaud WHO for clearly identifying priorities for technical assistance, status of country transition plans, and post-certification financial requirements. These are all essential first steps. Similarly, we appreciate that polio transition is being considered through the lens of WHO's three strategic priorities, enabling all related actors to maximize WHO's contribution to wider development goals.

Ahead of finalizing the strategic action plan by the World Health Assembly, we call for additional focus on the following:

- First, country transition plans must be finalized and implemented as soon as possible. The WHO Executive Board should continue to encourage commitments by Member States at the 2018 World Health Assembly to sustain progress. Further transparency and accountability must be provided around deliverables, timelines, and indicators of country plan ownership to ensure gaps in the Expanded Programs of Immunization do not occur, particularly for vulnerable populations.
- Second, clarification around transition management must be paired with clear commitments of financial resources from national governments to fully fund critical functions previously supported by the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI).
- Third, as raised in the latest Transition Independent Monitoring Board report, the eventual absence of a coordinating body like GPEI will leave gaps not currently acknowledged or understood. Clarity on future coordinating roles and responsibilities is essential.

Finally, all elements of transition planning must come with a robust communication effort to ensure that stakeholders beyond the polio community remain informed.