



## [Introduction of the Inactivated Polio Vaccine]

Introduction of the injectable Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV) into the National Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) was initiated at the Maharagama MOH office on 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2015 with the participation of Dr. Palitha Mahipala, Director General of Health Services, Dr. Paba Palihawadana, the Chief Epidemiologist, country representatives of WHO and UNICEF and many other officials of the Ministry of Health.

Sri Lanka took this initiative liaised with the Global Poliomyelitis Eradication Endgame strategies. Even though the South-East Asia region was declared polio-free in March 2014, the risk still persists until the disease is eradicated globally.

According to the previous schedule, Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV) was given at the completion of 2, 4, 6, 18 months and 5 years. OPV is a live attenuated vaccine which gives protection from polio virus types 1, 2 and 3. Both IPV and trivalent OPV (tOPV) will be given until the shifting of tOPV to bivalent OPV (bOPV which contains only type 1 and 3) during 2016. The introduction of at least one dose of IPV into the National EPI schedule will ensure the maintenance of immunity to polio virus type 2.

IPV is introduced as an intramuscular injection at the age of 4 months to be given together with the 2<sup>nd</sup> dose of pentavalent vaccine and the OPV.

This programme is carried out with the aim of eradicating polio from the world by 2018.

