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THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE AU COMMISSION
TRAVELS TO KANO FOR THE PAN-AFRICAN IMMUNIZATION CAMPAIGN
AGAINST POLIO

The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), H.E. Prof. Alpha Oumar Konaré, will participate in the launching of the Synchronized Pan-African Immunization Campaign against Poliomyelitis, which will take place in Kano, in the North of Nigeria, on Saturday October 2, 2004, under the chairmanship of H. E. Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The event will also be attended by Heads of State of Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Sudan and Chad, as well as the Deputy Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO).

Commenting the event, the Chairperson of the AU Commission, made the following statement: "The launching of the Immunization Campaign in Kano is a strong signal and a decisive step towards the eradication of polio".

The Choice of Kano as the venue for the launching of the Campaign is indeed quite significant because some Traditional Rulers in the North of Nigeria had until then called for a boycott of the Immunization Campaign against polio, at the very time when the re-emergence of polio in West Africa was being reported by WHO. According to WHO, 658 African children were paralyzed by polio in 2004.

The Pan-African Immunization Campaign which is organized simultaneously in 23 African Countries is targeting about 80 million children.

Addis Ababa, October 1, 2004