WHO donates incinerators to Tajikistan to dispose of medical waste

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Through a project supported by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, WHO has procured incinerators to support an effective health-care waste management system in Tajikistan. The procurement includes 8 diesel-fuelled incinerators with a capacity of 20–30 kg, and 6 wood-fuelled units with a capacity of 10–15 kg.

The 14 incinerators will be installed across the different regions of Tajikistan and used to burn waste generated as a result of providing health services such as immunization.

“For immunization to be truly effective, it must be safe for health workers, recipients of vaccines and the environment. Having the necessary equipment to implement effective waste management plans for routine vaccination campaigns means that medical waste will not be dumped or burned in an unsafe manner,” said Dr Victor Olsavsky, WHO Representative to Tajikistan.

Currently, there is a lack of incinerators to burn medical waste at high temperatures in Tajikistan, which has resulted in an accumulation of hazardous materials. This poses a potential threat to public health, as improper management of the waste may result in the spread of infectious diseases.

To protect their health workers and the population, health facilities in remote areas sometimes resort to sending their medical waste over long distances to be burned at a larger hospital with the right equipment.

In Tajikistan, vaccines against COVID-19 and influenza are having a major impact on public health. Furthermore, almost all children receive basic vaccinations to protect them from potentially life-threatening diseases such as rotavirus, diphtheria, poliomyelitis, rubella and

measles.

Immunization services generate medical waste, such as used masks, syringes and vials, which needs to be disposed of properly. These incinerators are a vital part of WHO's work to support Tajikistan in providing safe immunization services, even in the most remote areas of the mountainous country.

The procurement of these incinerators is an important milestone in the continued partnership between WHO and Tajikistan to strengthen primary health care, and specifically the immunization service system. The incinerators are key to the further implementation of the recently updated National Regulatory Guidelines on Health-care Waste Management, and an important result of the support offered by Gavi to strengthen the health system in Tajikistan.

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