

Dear polio eradication supporter,

This year, the Global Polio Eradication Initiative celebrated several major milestones that have brought the world closer than ever to stopping polio. Fewer cases have been reported so far through the year than in any other year on record. This progress would not have been possible without the many polio workers who have dedicated their lives to stopping polio in some of the most challenging and remote communities. That's why, this December, the United Arab Emirates and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation honoured five individuals who have gone above and beyond to protect all children from the disease at the first-ever Heroes of Polio Eradication (HOPE) Awards. Thanks in large part to these polio workers, as well as innovative shifts in strategy, Pakistan and Afghanistan, the only two countries that have never stopped polio transmission, have also been able to make significant progress toward eradication.

### In this issue:

- Looking back, planning ahead
- Honouring Polio Workers with HOPE
- Progress in Afghanistan and Pakistan

## LOOKING BACK, PLANNING AHEAD



Children in Dadaab Town in North Eastern Kenya show their marked fingers after being vaccinated against polio during the in-process monitoring following the wild type poliovirus outbreak in May 2013. © CDC

At the end of 2015, we can reflect on a remarkable year. Nigeria was [removed from the list of polio endemic countries](#), Africa [marked an entire year without wild poliovirus](#) for the first time in history and type 2 of [wild poliovirus \(WPV2\) was declared eradicated](#). In addition, more than 80% of the world's birth cohort will be routinely receiving a dose of the inactivated polio vaccine to boost their immunity against polio by the end of the year. These achievements provide a springboard for progress in 2016. Next year, in order to stop all types of poliovirus and boost children's immunity

against the disease, there will be a globally synchronised switch from the trivalent to bivalent oral polio vaccine (OPV). Afghanistan and Pakistan will redouble efforts to stop transmission. All vulnerable countries will also aim to improve surveillance and reach more children, while ensuring that the infrastructure created to stop polio can also continue delivering public health benefits after the disease is eradicated. And the international community will need to support countries to protect progress, including through additional funding. It is now more important than ever to maintain this momentum and secure a lasting legacy of a polio-free world for generations to come. [\[Read more\]](#)

## HONOURING POLIO WORKERS WITH HOPE

Thousands of polio workers around the world have selflessly dedicated their lives to stopping polio. On 6 December, five of these extraordinary individuals were honoured with the first-ever Heroes of Polio Eradication (HOPE) Awards in Abu Dhabi. Award recipients received recognition in five categories: Humanitarian, Education, Advocacy, Innovation and Achievement. His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, and Bill Gates personally presented the awards, which marked a continuation of the

### Making sure no child is forgotten in South Sudan

Keeping countries resilient against polio is an essential part of the work done towards a polio-free world. A series of photos from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shows how polio workers are delivering vaccines to children living in South Sudan's highly populated refugee camps. [\[Read more\]](#)

### POLIO IN THE NEWS

*NPR:* [WHO Asks Ukraine To Declare A State Of Emergency. The Reason? Polio](#)

*Project Syndicate:* [The Polio Heroes](#)  
*BBC (Media Action):* [Polio in State House](#)

### POLIO IN NUMBERS

#### Wild poliovirus in 2015

- Global Total: **66 (332)** ↓
- Global WPV1: **66 (332)** ↓
- Global WPV3: **0 (0)**

#### Endemic: **66 (313)** ↓

- Afghanistan: **17 (25)** ↓
- Pakistan: **49 (282)** ↓

#### Importation Countries: **0 (19)** ↓

#### Vaccine derived poliovirus type 1: **17 (2)** ↑

- Lao PDR: **5 (0)** ↑
- Madagascar: **10 (2)** ↑
- Ukraine: **2 (0)** ↑

#### Vaccine derived poliovirus type 2: **6 (45)** ↓

- Guinea: **1 (1)**
- Myanmar: **2 (0)** ↑
- Nigeria: **1 (24)** ↓
- Pakistan: **2 (20)** ↓

Data as of 15 December 2015. Numbers in brackets represent data at this time in 2014.

[Current case map](#)

United Arab Emirates' (UAE) commitment to stopping polio and the nation's partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. [\[Read more\]](#)

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## Countries to destroy poliovirus type 2

With wild poliovirus type 2 officially declared eradicated, all countries will need to now destroy or safely contain poliovirus type 2 in laboratories and vaccine facilities. [\[Read More\]](#)

## The switch: four months to go

Preparations are in full swing to prepare for the switch from trivalent to bivalent oral polio vaccine (tOPV and bOPV) in April 2016. The focus is now on finalising:

- National switch plans in every country
- Communication and training materials
- Inventories of tOPV stocks
- Micro-plans for bOPV distribution

[Find out more about the switch](#)

## FUNDING UPDATES

The US Congress has approved a total of US\$ 228 million for the 2016 federal budget to support global polio eradication efforts in continuation of the country's longstanding leadership in the fight to end polio. The funding represents a US\$ 10 million increase over the level of funding provided in fiscal year [2015](#).

Liechtenstein has donated 25 000 Swiss francs for polio operations worldwide, the final payment of their Vaccine Summit Pledge.

European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO) has given €370 000 to support the Ukraine polio outbreak response. This will help with coordination of vaccination campaigns, strengthening surveillance, training materials, community outreach, and monitoring and evaluation.

## PROGRESS IN AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN

For the first time in history only two polio endemic countries remain: Pakistan and Afghanistan. Both have made important strides toward ending polio in 2015. Both countries shifted their focus to the children who are being missed on vaccination campaigns in order to bring this number down and remove the final hiding places of the virus. In Pakistan this has resulted in almost half a million children being protected against polio who were previously missed. Afghanistan has taken steps to improve its programme through strengthened political commitment and coordination, and large swaths of the country remain polio-free. In 2016, both countries must continue to focus their efforts on improving surveillance and routine immunisation systems as well as reaching children through



campaigns, maintaining strong government commitment at all levels and increasing vaccination activities at transit points for mobile populations in order to stop polio transmission once and for all. [\[Read more\]](#)

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every last child

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