

## Global Leaders Unite to Bring Polio One Step Closer to Eradication

*Countries and partners pledge US\$ 1.2 billion to protect 450 million children from polio every year*

**ATLANTA (12 June 2017)** – Today, global health leaders gathered at the Rotary Convention in Atlanta to reaffirm their commitment to eradicating polio and pledge US\$ 1.2 billion to finance efforts to end the disease.

Thirty years ago, polio paralyzed more than 350,000 children each year in more than 125 countries around the world. Thanks to the extraordinary efforts of governments, health workers, donors and the partners of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI), a public-private partnership dedicated to ending the disease, the highly contagious virus has now been eliminated in all but three countries: Afghanistan, Nigeria and Pakistan. There have been only five cases to date in 2017.

However, children remain at risk everywhere until polio is completely stopped. To end the disease for good, government representatives and partners came together to renew their commitment to supporting crucial activities such as vaccination and disease monitoring, which will protect more than 450 million children from polio each year.

“Thanks to the incredible efforts of Rotarians, governments, health workers, partners and donors – including those who have gathered at the Rotary Convention in Atlanta – we are closer than ever to making history,” said Chris Elias, Global Development President, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Chair of the GPEI Polio Oversight Board. “These new commitments will help ensure that we will finish the job.”

In a time of many global challenges and priorities, governments and partners have stepped forward to demonstrate their collective resolve to seeing the second human disease ever eradicated. Major pledges include: US\$ 75 million from **Canada**, US\$ 61.4 million from the **European Commission**, US\$ 55 million from **Japan**, US\$ 30 million from Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, **United Arab Emirates**, US\$ 30 million from **the Dalio Foundation**, US\$ 25 million from **Bloomberg Philanthropies**, US\$ 15 million from an anonymous donor, US\$ 13.4 million from **Australia**, US\$ 11.2 million from **Germany**, US\$ 5 million from **easyJet**, US\$ 5 million from **Italy** and US\$ 4 million from the **Republic of Korea**.

Bill Gates, co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and John Germ, president of Rotary International, also announced an extension of their partnership in front of more than 20,000 Rotarians. Up to US\$ 150 million in funds raised by Rotary members over the next three years will be matched 2:1 by the Gates Foundation, resulting in up to US\$ 450 million in the next three years for the GPEI. The Gates Foundation pledged a total of US\$ 450 million, including this matching agreement.

“The global eradication of polio has been Rotary’s top priority since 1985. Rotary members have been the driving force behind the fight to end polio since its inception,” said John Germ, President of Rotary International. “Their continued commitment to raising funds for eradication – coupled with today’s match by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation – makes that impact even greater.”

Today's funding helps address a US\$1.5 billion funding need that will help ensure that the virus is eliminated from these remaining countries and prevented from regaining a foothold anywhere else in the world.

"Constant innovation has been key to improving vaccination coverage and reaching more children with the polio vaccine," said Dr. Anne Schuchat, Acting Director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "The unrelenting commitment and support of these global leaders will help us do just that—and ultimately end this disease for everyone and forever. CDC remains deeply committed to polio eradication and has contributed US\$ 2.28 billion since the beginning of the initiative."

Today's funding commitments will enable the program to continue to improve performance and overcome challenges to reach every child, including vaccinating children in conflict areas.

"We are, together, truly on the verge of eradicating polio from the planet—but only if we work relentlessly to reach the children we have not yet reached," said UNICEF Executive Director Anthony Lake. "We cannot fail to make this last effort. Because if we do not now *make* history, we will, and should be, judged harshly *by* history."

Thanks to efforts to date, polio has been eliminated from some of the most remote and challenging areas in the world. For example, India – once considered the most difficult place in the world to stop the disease – hasn't reported a case in more than six years. More than 16 million children worldwide are walking today who would otherwise have been paralyzed by this disease, and polio resources in countries around the world are helping advance other national health goals.

"The key to ending polio will be to ensure that millions of health workers – some of whom work in the most challenging environments in the world – are able to reach every child, everywhere in the world," said WHO Director-General Dr. Margaret Chan. "Eradicating polio will be a perpetual gift to coming generations."

Today's contributions and the continued commitment of all donors and partners will help end this devastating disease and ensure that the infrastructure and assets used to fight polio lay the foundation for better health outcomes for children everywhere for years to come.

**Note to Editors:**

Pledge values are expressed in US dollars. Donors include Australia, Canada, the European Commission, Germany, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, Accenture Interactive USA, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Dalio Foundation, easyJet, the Korea Foundation for International Healthcare (KOFIH)/Community Chest of Korea, the New Era Educational and Charitable Foundation, Rotary International, UNICEF Gulf Area Office, UNICEF USA, the United Nations Foundation/Shot@Life, and an anonymous donor. [Please click here to view the full list of donors and pledge amounts.](#)

For more information on the global effort to end polio, visit [polioeradication.org](http://polioeradication.org). To view and download photos, visit [gatesfoundation.isebox.net/2017-rotary-convention](http://gatesfoundation.isebox.net/2017-rotary-convention).

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## APPENDIX

### **Additional Stakeholder Remarks**

- **Afghanistan:** Hamdullah Mohib, the Ambassador to the United States of America from Afghanistan, said, “We’ve been ramping up our efforts and improving performance nationwide, and will continue to do so until we end the transmission of this disease in our country.”
- **Pakistan:** His Excellency Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister of Pakistan, said, “It takes just two drops of vaccine to protect a child from polio. But it takes hundreds of thousands of health workers to deliver those two drops to more than thirty seven million children in every home across Pakistan during each campaign. We celebrate the extraordinary work of these heroes and heroines and are very proud to be part of the largest public health initiative in history.”
- **Canada:** “The Government of Canada has been a part of this effort from the very beginning and will not stop until every girl and boy around the world is safe from this disease,” said Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, Canada.
- **Japan:** “The fight against polio can only be won as a collaborative, global effort,” said Takashi Shinozuka, Consul General of Japan in Atlanta. “As demonstrated by our additional funding for polio, the Government of Japan remains committed to working with the GPEI and other Governments to stop the transmission of polio, protect the lives of children and ensure that polio becomes the second disease in human history ever to be eradicated.”
- **The United Arab Emirates:** “The UAE is proud to be a leader in the effort to end polio and looks forward to a future in which every child and every country around the world is able to experience the full economic and health benefits of polio eradication,” said Yousef Al Otaiba, Ambassador to the United States of America from the United Arab Emirates.
- **Germany:** “Germany has been and will continue to be a strong partner in polio eradication,” said Thomas Silberhorn, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, BMZ. “We are very close to achieving our goal, but the last mile is the hardest. We want to prove that we can end a disease today and we want to strengthen health systems to make sure that eradication of polio becomes irreversible.”
- **easyJet:** “easyJet is proud to be a part of the global fight to end polio,” said Carolyn McCall, CEO of easyJet. “Thanks to the incredible generosity of our passengers and the efforts of our crew, easyJet is raising vital funds so that, together, we can end polio forever.”
- **Republic of Korea:** “The Government of Korea is committed to working with governments and polio partners around the world to finish off this disease,” said Mr. Jung Jin-kyu, Director-General for Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea
- **United States:** “Now is not the time to let up,” said Dr. Thomas Price, Secretary of Health and Human Services. “We are in the home stretch of this fight, but the hardest work still lies ahead. The only way we will succeed is by working together, harder and

smarter than ever before. We at the Department of Health and Human Services are committed to doing all that we can to support this effort.”